



HIDDEN HEROES OF THE ROCKIES

Russell
Driggs

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Hidden Heroes of
the Rockies



"She whispered her word of warning." (See page 248.)

Pioneer Life Series

HIDDEN HEROES OF THE ROCKIES

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In Collaboration with Howard R. Driggs

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ILLUSTRATED

with drawings by Herman Palmer
and with photographs



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THE HOUSE OF APPLIED KNOWLEDGE

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The Pioneer Life Series would not be complete without a background book to give a proper setting for the tale of the home-building settlers. And here we have such a volume, telling briefly yet with vivid detail the epoch-making story of the trail blazers of our Far Western frontier. Out in the heart of the Rockies was enacted the main part of this great adventure; yet the story links the Atlantic with the Pacific and swings across our country from Mexico to Canada. It even brings several of the leading nations into a tense struggle for power and possession in this transmontane region. Out of it all emerge a number of new names of heroes that have remained for a century or more practically hidden from the school boys and school girls and from the general reader. These heroes—mountaineer trappers for the most part—carried the spirit of America into the wilderness, braving dangers and enduring hardships with such courage as to add new luster to our country's story. It is gratifying to World Book Company now to be able to give to these neglected heroes merited praise, and at the same time to emphasize the vital significance of the work performed by those who blazed the way for the building of the great states within our mountain-walled West

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A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

THIS book is an outgrowth of the love of two boys for real stories of adventure. Born out in the Rocky Mountain region, they gathered from their pioneer parents at their firesides many of the tales of the days when the Great West was being settled and subdued, and with these tales naturally came an eager desire for more and more. They attended the same college, then as they went out into life their paths diverged, but both kept the love for heroic tales in their hearts.

One of these boys, Isaac K. Russell, after a series of adventures as an American volunteer in the Philippines, returned to enter the field of journalism. In this capacity he was working when Senator William A. Clark of Montana built his railroad connecting Salt Lake City with Los Angeles. On its completion the builder decided to dedicate his new road, by giving a free Pullman trip to all of the old pioneers who had helped to blaze the hard trail through sage and sand over which the rails had now been laid.

At that time the question, what white man had first dared to take this desert trail, became a burning one. Mr. Russell, assigned the interesting work of writing up the excursion for the newspaper he represented, set out earnestly to gather from the best sources at hand this tale of the trail blazing through our Southwest.

Hardly had his account come from the press before there appeared at his door an old mountaineer clad in buckskin, odorous of a thousand bonfires. This veteran of the Rockies came to make his protest; the story, he asserted, had not even mentioned the first real trail blazers of that

region. Then he disclosed a tale of heroism that held the journalist with its gripping charm. He spoke of his old trapper companions long passed away, and of his Indian wife with whom he had lived for many years in the mountains, and of their dark-eyed daughters and stalwart sons. But most of all he urged that the heroic men who had opened the way for the pioneers be given their proper meed of praise for the work they had accomplished.

The result of this visit of the old mountaineer was to stimulate further search on the part of the journalist to discover these real trail blazers of the Farther West. For more than a score of years, as time permitted, he has kept at this work of love, delving into the scant yet rich records these men of action have left behind.

The other boy also for these more than twenty years had been delving into the rich stories of our American pioneer life. He had gone further. Having found a publisher who believed with him that these stories should be preserved in attractive form, he was building out of the fine materials he had found in his travels over our country a series of books to give the true stories of our pioneers to the boys and girls of America and of the world. While searching for historical writers to help him in rounding out this series, he found in the city of New York the schoolmate of his boyhood, Mr. Russell.

The result of this meeting of the two friends in the metropolis was their joining in an effort to produce a book which would give in concise yet concrete form the essence of one of our finest epics—the story of the trail blazers of our last frontier.

Here, then, is the little volume—picturing truly and vividly the pre-pioneer era in the lands that lie between the Columbia and the Colorado. It has been written in a spirit of love for real stories of adventure, and illus-

trated in that same spirit by an artist born in the West. Our hope is that it will radiate some of the same joy that has been found in the creating of the book, and also give to those who read it a keener love for our America.

HOWARD R. DRIGGS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. THE NORTHERN MYSTERY	1
An introductory sketch giving the geographical center of the story and setting the problem to be solved	
2. ESCALANTE'S UNFULFILLED PROMISE	7
How the first white men penetrated the realm of mystery only to turn back baffled in their main quest	
3. BLAZING THE WESTWARD TRAILS	17
Sketching the stories of the earliest trail blazers of our country and Canada in the Far West	
4. AMERICA TAKES A HAND IN THE FUR GAME	24
How Major Henry and his Kentucky mountaineers braved the Blackfeet—The story of making the second trail across our country	
5. FINDING THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST	33
The discovery by the Kentucky Hunters of an easy way through the Rockies—Their second disaster at the hands of Indian robbers—Their retreat—The significant meeting with friends on the Snake	
6. A GLIMPSE INTO THE MYSTERY LAND	41
The entrance into the Great Basin by the returning Astorians—Their encounter with the Crows and flight for life	
7. UNHORSED IN A WILDERNESS	47
A piece of thievery that put strong hearts to an al- most tragic test	
8. TRAILING HOMEWARD THROUGH THE SOUTH PASS	54
Finding a burden bearer—Going eastward through the gateway	
9. CARRYING A MESSAGE TO AMERICA	62
The returning Astorians bring back to civilization their report of the discovery of the great way to the West	
10. AN INDIAN HEROINE'S STORY	71
The fate of the Kentucky Hunters—A heroic mother's successful struggle to save her children	
11. PEDLARS FROM THE NORTH	79
The bold Nor'west mountaineers open the fur trade in the mystery region	
12. MACKENZIE'S DAY OF TRIUMPH	86
Bringing riches out of the Rockies	

CHAPTER	PAGE
13. THE EAGLE BEARDS THE LION IN THE WEST	91
American and British traders cross trails in the mountain realm	
14. "FRIENDLY ENEMIES" IN THE ROCKIES	99
A common danger brings rivals together and they fight side by side	
15. WRITTEN ON A PRECIPICE	106
How General Ashley reopened the Western fur trade for our country	
16. BREAKING THE RED BLOCKADE	113
Major Henry comes back into the mountains—Ashley's fight—Young Smith carries a message to Henry	
17. DISCOVERING AMERICA'S "INLAND SEA"	121
How the youngest of the mountaineers makes the major discovery in the Mystery Realm	
18. REBLAZING THE OVERLAND TRAIL	125
Ashley's battle with the blizzards and other difficulties in the reopening of the Platte River Trail to the Rockies	
19. THE LAST OF THE VOYAGEURS	133
The first great adventure by boatmen down the Green River, and its outcome	
20. TALES TOLD AT A RENDEZVOUS	141
The first gathering of Ashley's men in the Rockies, at which they tell their tales of adventure	
21. DARING THE SOUTHWESTERN DESERTS	151
Blazing a trail across the desert wastes from Salt Lake to San Diego, and the heroic return across the barren lands of Nevada	
22. THE TRAGIC COST OF TRAIL BLAZING	159
Smith's second desert venture and its dire results—The tragic story of the Patties in the Southwest	
23. MORE BORDER TREACHERY	171
Americans meet another appalling disaster in the Oregon country—The rescue of the remnant of the band by British	
24. STIRRING THE EMBERS OF '76	180
Rivalry at fever heat in the fur regions of the West	
25. ROLLING OUT OF THE ROCKIES	186
Trapping under Blackfoot fire—Success, and the return home	
26. THE PASSING OF A DAUNTLESS EXPLORER	195
The tragic closing chapter in Jedediah Strong Smith's fine American life	

Contents

xi

CHAPTER	PAGE
27. M'SIEU PETE'S LAST DISCOVERY	202
Story of the finding of the great desert "River of Hope" by a bold Scotch explorer	
28. OGDEN AT OGDEN'S HOLE	210
The Scotch trader's battles in the desert—His clash with rivals in Ogden's Hole—The withdrawal from the Mystery Realm	
29. RED FEATHER'S LAST RIDE	221
A tale of real Indian daring, as told by Ogden	
30. GATHERING OF THE MOUNTAIN CLAN	229
The famous rendezvous of 1832 in Pierre's Hole—Fitzpatrick's brave ride	
31. SUBDUING THE BLACKFEET	235
A fight in the Teton Valley between old foes	
32. BRIDGER ON THE WARPATH	240
The follow-up campaign of the mountaineers against the Indians	
33. A GREEN RIVER POCAHONTAS	245
The story of an Indian girl's heroic act in saving two trappers, and the love episode that followed	
34. MYSTERIOUS MOVEMENTS OF MILITARY MEN	252
American and British army men take a first-hand survey of the West under cover	
35. MISSIONARIES GET A TASTE OF MOUNTAINEERING	263
Men of the Church mingle with the traders in their Rocky Mountain rendezvous—The Good Samaritan of the Rockies	
36. DEDICATING THE MOUNTAIN LAND TO MOTHERHOOD	269
Story of the first white women to cross the great divide through the South Pass	
37. SETTLING AN OLD SCORE IN CALIFORNIA	279
The winning of the Golden State to America—Fremont's mountaineer army settles a long-standing account	
38. THE MOUNTAINEER WELCOMES THE PIONEER	285
The coming of the home-building settlers to redeem the desert land of mystery—The passing of the pioneer era	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	295



CHAPTER ONE

THE NORTHERN MYSTERY

THE rivers of every clime are always closely linked with its songs and its stories. What a wealth of legend and music and romance, for example, comes at the mere mention of the Nile, the Jordan, the Tiber, the Danube, the Rhine, or now the Marne. How many tender songs and thrilling stories arise too, when we hear Ohio, Suwanee, Potomac, Hudson, Rio Grande, Mississippi, or Tennessee. And all because along these and other wondrous streams of our country and of other lands has been enacted so much of the dramatic history of the world.

But the tale to be told here is not of any river region. This story is centered in an unusual part of our America whose commanding water is a great lake which sparkles like a diamond in the midst of the mountains of the Farther West.

This lake is so salt that one cannot sink in its waters. The first lone trappers who paddled around it in a canoe nearly died of thirst. Its discoverer tasted its briny waters and thought it an arm of the ocean. Indians bathed in it for the stinging effect of its crystal brine upon their chafed skins. They came forth in coats of saline white, but they found the lake "great medicine" for their ills.

The lofty mountains to the east and south and north are forever sending down from their snows countless streams of living water into this inland sea. But these streams never find a way out of it to the ocean. On every side they are held back by mountain barriers until they are drunk up again by the thirsty desert air.



Sunset on Great Salt Lake, showing the picturesque Black Rock Island.

The way of the earlier explorers was blocked whenever they tried to find a way into this mountain-walled basin. They could discover no river along which they might thread their way into this vast strange region.

Hudson had penetrated our country by sailing up the stream which bears his name. Cartier had opened another route into it up the St. Lawrence. Father Marquette, La Salle, and other explorers by way of streams and portages had found their way into the heart of our Middle West. Lewis and Clark, later, had crossed the Continent by taking the tortuous course of the Missouri and the Columbia.

But the old rule of exploration—"Follow the waterways"—unfailing elsewhere, failed in the great desert basin which lies between the Rockies and the Sierras.

Baffled in their attempts to discover the secrets of this mountain-guarded realm, the Spaniards called it "The Northern Mystery."

And a land of mystery it remained until after all the other parts of our country had been mapped and charted.

This Great Basin was indeed practically an unknown region on the maps until nearly a third of the nineteenth century had passed away.

Even as late as 1844 Fremont, one of our famous army officers, lost some of his men and horses and almost lost his life while, with his little band of explorers, he was struggling through the eastern foothills of the Sierras, looking in vain for the mythical river Buenaventura, which the old Spanish maps had pictured as flowing out from those parts to the Pacific Ocean.

This geographical error had doubtless been passed on to the Spaniards by the Indians. Among the legends of the desert redmen is one which tells of a time when a large part of what is now Utah and Nevada was covered by a great



Dr. F. J. Pack, University of Utah

The old shore lines of Lake Bonneville.

Inland Sea. Over this sea Indians paddled in canoes from mountain range to mountain range.

This legend is founded on fact. The geological record of this prehistoric sea is plainly marked on the mountain sides that make its rugged coast. Rising one above the other up to a thousand feet or more above the valley floor, the varying shore lines may yet be distinctly traced.

These shore lines show how the waters rose and fell until the Inland Sea, which once was larger and deeper than Lake Michigan, had dwindled down to the present Great Salt Lake and a few other brackish lake remnants now scattered over the region.

But how was this mountain-locked realm finally made to yield these secrets? What white men first penetrated this Great Salt Lake region? Who first dared its deserts? In a word, what is the story of the trail blazing, the mapping and charting of this, our last American frontier?

These questions, lifted into the clear several years ago brought only vague and unsatisfactory answers. A few glimpses gave some hint of a heroic past; the details were lost in the shadows. But as piece by piece the full story, through earnest study, was brought together, the alkali deserts, the valleys and the mountains of these regions came alive with hidden heroes of the pre-pioneer days.

These heroes were covered with desert dust, to be sure, but some of them had matched in heroism the finest deeds that Montreal, with its story of Radisson, could offer, or Michigan with its stories of La Salle, or Kentucky with its tales of Boone.

The stories of those great communities to the east are of brilliant beginnings. Ours is a tale of equally brilliant endings. From the sunrise hour for American exploration our scene shifts to the sunset hour and the Golden West.

In this great region came to a close the work of the splendid Spanish priest-explorers, whose sandaled feet trod so much of American soil before any other white men had spied it out. Here too was ended the work of the daring Scotchmen of the Nor'west clan which had pressed from Hudson's Bay across the continent and to the Arctic Circle. In the Mystery Realm also the French voyageurs, under the lead of native-born Americans, launched their canoes on the last virgin waters the paddles of such explorers were to find in our fair land.

The honor for these achievements in nineteenth-century exploration belongs mainly to native American mountaineers — men of the spirit of Daniel Boone. One of these hardy explorers who first found the open door into the West had even fought at Boone's side. Another intrepid young mountaineer whose people had intermarried with those of the great Kentucky pathfinder first beheld the briny waters of the Great Salt Lake. And another bold mountaineer

of Puritan stock, accepting the challenge of the Great American Desert, blazed the way back and forth across it and charted it from north to south and west to east.

Many other daring Americans and men also of other nations played their various parts in discovering the secrets of the Northern Mystery.

Not all their tales of heroism can ever be told, because the actors in this early-day drama in the Western wilds were primarily men of deeds, not words. Yet within the fragments of historical material they have left in the form of diaries, letters, and memoirs, may be found many true and thrilling stories which, linked together, make a chain of events that is most satisfying to every lover of real adventure and to every true American heart.





Father Escalante making a treaty with the Utah Indians.

CHAPTER TWO

ESCALANTE'S UNFULFILLED PROMISE

ON the morning of September 22, 1776, signal fires blazing on Utah's great mountain, Timpanogos, spread far and wide a warning to the Indians of that region that some strange peril was upon them. The red men, dressed in robes of rabbit skins and other primitive trappings, gazed at the fires with questioning fear. Had their old enemies, the Comanches, come again upon them? Or what was the danger that threatened?

It was not the Comanches, nor was it any Indian foe, they soon discovered, but another race of people. Men with pale faces such as these Indians had never before seen had entered their mountain fastness. The signal fires were both a warning and the herald of a new day for that hidden realm. They announced the passing of the dominion of the savage over the land of the Northern Mystery.

These first white men to penetrate the unknown region were humble exploring priests, the last of their generation



D. S. Spencer, Union Pacific System

Mt. Timpanogos.

and of their race in our America. Such men as they had carried the banners of Spain northward from Mexico City, and had planted their missions throughout Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona and California. Now they had brought the Cross to America's last frontier.

While the signal fires burned all around them, the priests and their followers waited in the foothills. They were ragged and hungry, and completely unarmed except with prayer book, rosary, and Bible. Their mission was not one of conflict but of peace. They had come to search out souls to lead into the light. A special work also had been given them to perform on this journey; they were to find a new road from the old Spanish town of Santa Fe to the new Spanish seacoast settlement of Monterey in upper California.

Why should such men of Christian meekness be given this difficult task? Simply because Spain had tried the policy of harshness in seeking to blaze such a way a century earlier and had been hurled back with terrific loss. Lowly men of the Cross might go where soldiers could not tread. The priest had almost always found a welcome with the Indian inhabitants of the country.

Father Silvestre Velez de Escalante, but recently arrived from Spain to dedicate his life to the conversion of Indians, was the senior of these two priest-explorers. With him was Father Atanasio Dominguez. And besides these were a number of citizens from Santa Fe, and also some Zuñi Indians.

The little band of trail blazers had found it most difficult to penetrate the land of mystery. They had had to force their way over hidden paths, blinded by special pains of the Ute Indians to keep their foes, the Comanches, from trailing them home. They had had to uncover water holes skillfully rocked over by the Indians to deceive their

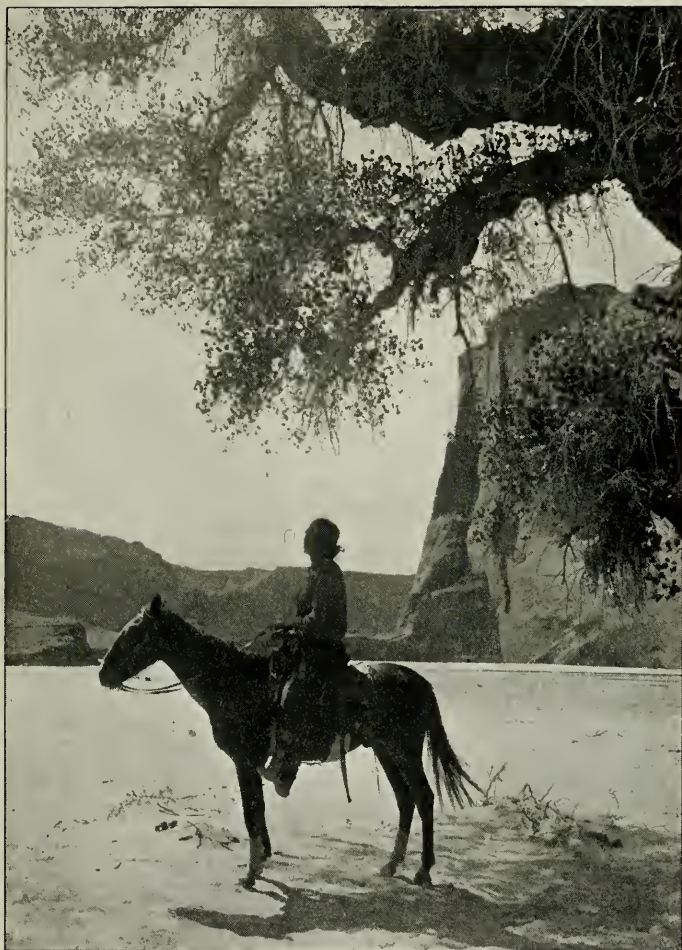
enemies. They had battled through the rough regions of the Painted Desert country for many weary days. At every Indian encampment they had met chieftains who urged them to turn back before it was too late. But they had persisted in spite of difficulties and peril. And so the sandaled foot of the priest had at last trodden upon the Utah mountains.

Their painful march had led across the mesas of New Mexico, over the Grand and the Green rivers. Thence they had toiled up a branch of the Green through a craggy canyon to the summit of the Wasatch range, one of the barriers that held men back from the mystery land. Crossing this mountain rim, the explorers went on, down through what has since been named the Spanish Fork Canyon, and soon they emerged into the wondrous valley lying beneath Mount Timpanogos. It had taken fifty-six long, difficult days to make this journey into the heart of the mystery land.

The signal fires of the "Yutas" halted them. The good fathers did not know whether or not the Indians would kill them. But they said their prayers, and trusted all to their faith. Then they decked out their Indian guides, Silvestre and Joaquin, with a red ribbon for one and a blanket and woolen cloth for the other, and sent them forth to hold parley. It was at the mystic hour of two in the morning. Pursuant to Indian custom in such circumstances, the guides talked long and loud in their native language, but no Indians responded.

When dawn came, the white men saw the grass on all sides of them burning fiercely. The Indians had determined to destroy the pastures for the horses of these new strange intruders. The priests wrote in their diary that there was so much grass the Indian plan could never win.

At last the Indian guides spied a village of their own



Santa Fe R. R.

Navajo Indian of the Arizona deserts.

people and rushed ahead into the arms of friends. They displayed their presents, vouched for the goodness of the footsore and weary priests, and at last brought about a council between the white men and the Indians.

Father Escalante opened the way to a friendly relationship with the Indians by presenting to a chief a knife, some glass beads, and a hatchet. To all the others bold enough to venture near him, he gave glass beads. These the Indians valued highly; for they would take the place of colored porcupine quills as ornaments for moccasins.

There was one sick papoose. Would the good Father make him well? Father Escalante blessed it, and saw it recover.

He looked over the valley with its meadows, its fertile uplands and leaping streams. Here he thought a mission might thrive, and he promised the Indians that he would come again the next spring and establish one.

"I will teach you," he told them, "to plant, to sow the land and to raise herds."

The Indians drew up a treaty, granting to the Spanish fathers all the land they wanted for mission sites, and for farms and vineyards to surround them. On a deerskin they drew three figures, one in red, one in pink, and one in black. These three men, they said, were their leaders. The one that was drawn in red was their war chief, who had received the most wounds in defending the tribe from the Comanches; the one drawn in pink was a lesser warrior, who had been only slightly wounded; the one drawn in black was no warrior at all, they said, but "a man of authority among them."

The Indians probably did not want to tell Escalante that this man was their "medicine man," who danced around their sick to cure them and make spells against the enemy in times of war.

Escalante folded this valuable parchment and took up his weary march to the south and west toward Monterey. He was determined to come back the following year and found a mission like those that were then developing in California and other parts of the Southwest.

But Escalante was destined never to reach California, and never to return to these good Indians. The guardian deserts of the land of the Northern Mystery lay in wait for him, just as to this day they lie in wait for the weary traveler. Baffled and beaten by the difficulties they threw in his way, he was forced to give up the quest.

As the party went on south over that part of Utah since called "Escalante Desert," bitter fall weather came. A snowstorm, followed by a thaw, turned the clay desert floor into mud. Through this the explorers stumbled, knee-deep in the slush and chilled to the bone. One of their horses mired in a marsh and nearly perished. A Utah "nor'wester" was blowing up its preface to the hard winter soon to follow.

Their difficulties multiplied as they toiled on. The food supply was getting low. The dried fish, purchased in the first barter between white man and Indians in this great mountain area, was almost gone. The miles to the sea seemed endless. Besides, no Indians could be found to guide the way. The trail was blind.

All hands fell to disputing whether to turn back, beaten, or to dare the desert in a winter rush towards the coast.

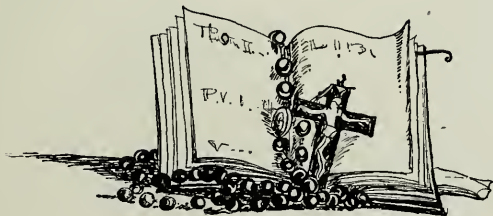
"Having implored divine forbearance," wrote Escalante in his diary, "and the intercession of our patron saints, we decided to endeavor to find out the will of God by casting lots, one for Monterey and one for Cosnina [on the road home]. We recited the penitential psalms with the litanies and other prayers which followed. Concluding our prayers, we cast lots and it came out in favor of Cos-

nina. We accept this, thanks be to God, willingly and joyfully."

This decision made, the explorers struck straight for the roaring waters of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. After many futile trials, they finally crossed the river and reached at last their friends in Santa Fe.

Americans remember the year 1776 as the one in which the Declaration of Independence was signed. George Washington was then leading the colonial armies to victory. The Spaniards were destined to remember it as the year in which Spain's last great exploring expedition into the boundaries of our land was made. As the star of America arose, the star of Spanish dominion on the American continent began to set.

Overseas the hand of Spain was palsied by a stronger nation; it could thrust into the New World no longer. For many "snows" the Indians watched and waited for the black-robed fathers to return, but they did not come. Escalante's promise to come again into the land of the Northern Mystery was not destined to be fulfilled.





Sakakawea, "The Bird Woman," a statue by Crunelle at Bismarck, North Dakota.

CHAPTER THREE

BLAZING THE WESTWARD TRAILS

FOLLOWING the venture of the Spanish priests, more than thirty years had quietly come and gone before any other white men found their way into the land of mystery. And these next adventurers to enter the hidden realm just barely crossed its northern borders. For nearly half a century, indeed, after the eventful 1776 the Great Basin region beyond the Rockies lay practically a blank space on the maps of our land — a constant challenge to the explorers of the time.

Not that the trail blazers of America were idle or lacking in courage during these years. Quite the contrary: this was a period of most brilliant achievements in American exploration. In 1792, our own Captain Robert Gray discovered the great river of the West, called the Oregon, and named it the Columbia, after his good ship. Alexander Mackenzie, the bold Scotchman, after discovering the great river of the North, which still bears his name, battled his way in 1793, across the Canadian Rockies on to the Pacific. The Russians during these years were also extending their explorations down the coast from Alaska. And all the while the French and British fur hunters from Mackinac Island and the Spanish and French from St. Louis were thrusting out farther and farther into the wilds of America to search every stream and lake for its riches.

In 1803 came the Louisiana Purchase to open the great Northwest for aggressive exploration and enterprise on the part of our own country. In the next year the Lewis and Clark expedition was sent to spy out our new possessions. Making their toilsome way up the Missouri into



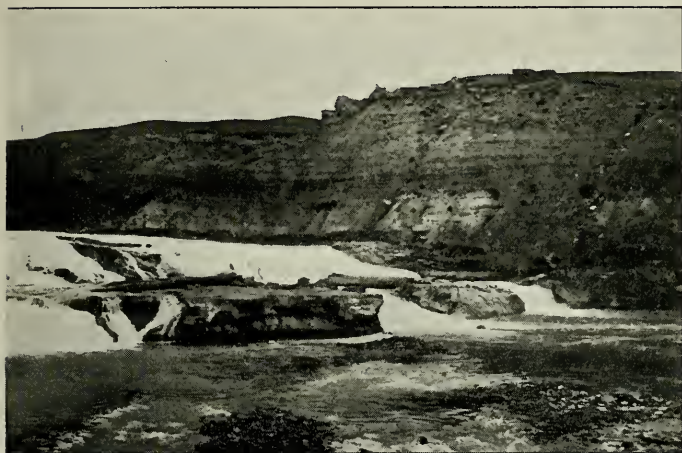
The "Great Falls" of the

the land of the Dakotas, these courageous captains with their band spent the first winter of their journey among the Mandans.

There they found an Indian girl, who knew the trail into the farther West. Sakakawea, "the Bird Woman"—a Shoshone, was living in the Mandan village, with her French husband. Some years before, as a little girl, she had been stolen by the Sioux and carried away from her mountain land out on to the great plains; but she had never forgotten the way back home. She became a happy child again when her husband accepted the offer of the white Captains to accompany the explorers with her to guide them on across the Rockies.

For many weeks the trail blazers toiled on, under "the Bird Woman's" sure guidance, up the Missouri to its Three Forks.

Following one of these, they soon came into the land



Missouri River, in Montana.

Montana Power Company

where lived Sakakawea's people. Here she found her brother — a chieftain of the tribe. It was a joyous reunion. The Shoshone leader and his band gave a warm welcome also to the white men who had brought their long-lost girl back to them. Through her influence several of these Indians were induced to act as guides for the party on its farther march to the Pacific.

Our country's claim to the regions drained by the Columbia, established first through the discovery of the river by Captain Gray, was thus made doubly sure by the explorations of Lewis and Clark.

The record of their achievement reads like a romance. But their tale was so full of hardships as to check for a time the rising enthusiasm for the Far West. This discouragement, however, was soon swept aside by the rivalry for the riches of the fur trade. In the race for the untrapped regions of America's last frontier, the British

and the American fur traders came into such keen competition as almost to precipitate a third war between our country and England.

The story of that fight for the fur-bearing regions of the Far West is inseparably linked to the story of the solving of the Northern Mystery. To understand it all we must know more of the historical backgrounds of the tale. A "bird's-eye view" at this point of the events leading up to this culminating contest and achievement will help to make the whole story crystal clear.

And yet it all began with the adventure of a boy who, disregarding his parents' advice, went out shooting. This boy lived at Three Rivers, near Quebec in Canada. He knew a small lake, just outside the town, where wild ducks could be shot.

"Come along," he said to two companions, "and we will kill some ducks." The three started out. Indians crawled through the grass behind them and listened to their boyish prattle. The other two lost heart and wanted to turn back. But the third said, "I am not afraid. I will go on alone."

He did so, and the Indians killed and scalped the two who turned back. "Him heap brave," they said of the third, for they admired his boldness. They let him go to the lake and shoot his ducks. Then they trailed him back to where his two dead companions lay and there they took him prisoner.

It was a fateful event upon American history, for this lad was Radisson, whose tales of adventures among the Indians led to the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company by the British and to the opening of great fur-trading enterprises by the French of Montreal and Quebec. Radisson lived with the Indians through his boyhood and thus was led far west toward Minnesota and along the rivers

leading into Hudson's Bay. He escaped at last near Albany, New York, and made his way back home by ship. From the day he told his story there was no peace for the French until they could know intimately all the canoe lanes up the St. Lawrence and across the hills to the waters of Hudson's Bay and its tributaries.

They put Radisson in jail for bringing in furs without a license, but over his trails they sent out hunters until their coffers ran with wealth. Thus came the Minnesota country into the white man's ken.

Following in the wake of Radisson, Cartier, Champlain, Father Marquette, and La Salle, came a host of the sons of France in quest of the wealth along the hidden streams and the woods of this land. The valleys of the St. Lawrence, the Ohio, and the upper Mississippi were soon alive with the *coureurs de bois* — as these rovers of the woods came to be called.

The *coureurs de bois* searched out every stream and lake and forest in their trapping and trading. At the risk of their own scalps they combed the wilds for fine furs. The immediate result was untold riches for France; a more lasting result of their work, however, came in their blazing of new trails and the charting of the American wilderness for the settlers who were soon to crowd into these fertile regions to build their homes and their cities.

Every year a rendezvous would be held at each important trading post. The wood rovers, shooting down the rapids and over the lakes in their fur-laden canoes, would gather at the post as at a fair. While they bartered their peltries, they swapped their stories of adventure and discovery. And all the time, with drinking and gambling and revelry, most of them would spend their hard-gotten riches down to the last sou. Their furs and money gone, they were obliged to take to their canoes and paddle their

way upstream farther into the wilds to stock up again with furs and wait for the next rendezvous with its trading and revelry.

The French and Indian War brought a sudden, serious change in the fortunes of these gay voyageurs. With the passing of Canada, in 1763, into the hands of the British, came restrictions on the fur traders. They could follow the business now only by paying heavy licenses. Under this handicap, the unthrifty coureurs de bois were forced either to enter into a kind of vassalship with the British fur companies then organizing, or else to get out of the country.

When Canada was ceded to England, the Louisiana territory went to Spain. Many of the French Canadians chose to go over into Louisiana. These voyageurs, as in the case of Sakakawea's husband, gave valuable assistance later to the American explorers and fur-trading companies.

The first effect of the French and Indian War was to bring an ebb tide to the fur trade. But very soon the business, reorganized under thrifty Scotch leadership, began to rise to its highest mark. It is now we begin to hear of the Mackenzies, M'Tavishes, McDougals, McLoughlins, Stuarts and others of ringing old Scotch family names, directing the Canadian forces. The great Northwest Company was soon thrusting out and bringing the northern dominion largely within its clannish power.

These old Highland chieftains seemed to know just how best to follow up the French and manipulate the Indian tribes to advantage. Their striking success was due in large measure to the fact that the organization of the tribe is very nearly the same as that of the Highland clan.

Further than this, these Scotchmen could officiate with such royal show and ceremony as most quickly to captivate the heart of the Indian. And if anything more was

needed to make the bonds of business interest secure, it was found in the linking of themselves in marriage with the Indian maidens.

It was with this closely knit, far-reaching organization that our free American trappers and traders first had to compete for supremacy in the Western wilds. And later, when the Nor'westers had been swallowed up by the Hudson's Bay Company, the Americans had a doubly powerful rival backed by Great Britain to outmatch.

How our mountaineers won and held their own against this force comes out of the stories that follow. In this struggle for the fur trade, the trails throughout our great Northwest were blazed and charted; and the Northern Mystery Land was made to yield its many secrets.





Kentucky hunters floating down the Missouri.

CHAPTER FOUR

AMERICA TAKES A HAND IN THE FUR GAME

FIRST of the Americans to lead a band of our hunters and trappers into the heart of the Rockies was Major Andrew Henry. Taking the dare of the Wild West, in 1809 this intrepid native son of Virginia and adopted son of Missouri, after organizing the Missouri Fur Trading Company, thrust out with a selected group of brave men along the trail of Lewis and Clark to the Three Forks of the Missouri. Here he planted the first American trading post in the Rockies.

The Blackfeet Indians made a bloody protest against this intrusion of the Americans into the territory they ruled. One incident, connected with the Lewis and Clark expedition, had possibly helped to stir up their enmity. In 1806, on the return trip, Captain Lewis had, during an altercation with the Indians, shot and killed a Blackfoot chieftain. The Captain escaped, but the anger of the tribe was kindled against the Americans.

There was a deeper reason, however, why the Blackfeet continued bitterly to fight every American that came within their reach. They had been supplied with rifles by rival traders; these guns had made them the lords of the Rockies. It would be "bad medicine" for the haughty Blackfeet if the Americans should trade guns to the Shoshones and other Indian tribes whom the Blackfeet had wronged.

Major Henry and his band were forced by these foes to abandon their post at the Three Forks. But they did not retreat; instead, with true American spirit, they pushed on farther into the mountains.

Crossing the continental divide, the little band planted another post on what has since been named the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. From this vantage point, in the land of the friendly Shoshones, the trappers and hunters were sent out in every direction in quest of furs. The Indians of the Shoshone, Bannock and other tribes came to the post bringing their peltries to trade.

But the Blackfeet were still determined to dislodge the daring Americans. The Indians without doubt had been stirred to this determination by the rival traders. So with spring came a renewal of the fighting, with the killing of some of Henry's men. The little American band was not strong enough to carry on its work in the face of this treacherous treatment.

Major Henry wisely decided that the time was not ripe for his venture. Reluctantly, and with a settled determination one day to return for his reward and his revenge, he abandoned his farthest West American outpost, and withdrew temporarily out of the Rockies. Down the Yellowstone River he and his band floated back to Missouri with too scanty a cargo of furs to pay for all the hardships and dangers they had endured.

*Great Northern R. R.**A Blackfoot Indian encampment in the Rockies.*

Three of Henry's men decided to stay in the mountains a little longer. These were a trio of hunters from old Kentucky. One of them was Edward Robinson, who had fought with Boone on the "Bloody Ground of Kentucky." In that savage conflict Robinson had been wounded, scalped, and left for dead. But he had survived, and now a handkerchief covered the spot where his scalp should have been.

The other two men were John Hoback, and Jacob Rezner. Their story had been less tragic than Robinson's, but they were men of like mettle. Together these three companions had faced all the dangers of the mountains and endured the hardest of hardships. They decided to stay out another winter at least, trying for better fortune. So Major Henry outfitted them and, bidding them good luck, left the three hunters "on their own" to penetrate still farther the craggy land and learn more of its secrets.

While all these things were happening to Henry and his men, another man away off in New York City was laying his plans to extend the American fur trade in the Northwest on a royal scale. John Jacob Astor, the great fur merchant, who had learned the game through his dealings with the Scotch and Canadians, was organizing a rival company to trap and trade in all the regions drained by the Missouri and the Columbia.

Already he was outfitting his forces. One was to go by land, the other by sea; and both, coöperating, were to establish a line of posts to reach from the Father of Waters to the mouth of the Columbia.

Down the Hudson River one day came a fleet of canoes bearing a host of gay voyageurs singing their boat songs. They stopped at New York to enlist for Astor's Western service.

In 1811 the good ship *Tonquin*, bearing these and other

seafaring Astorians, sailed out of New York harbor to make its way around Cape Horn and up to the river Captain Gray had discovered. The voyage, from the seaman's point of view, was successful. At the Sandwich Islands the force was increased somewhat by adding a few Hawaiians. In good time the ship entered the waters of the Columbia and the men soon built near the mouth of the river a trading post which they called Astoria.

At about the time of the sailing of the *Tonquin*, the overland party also set out from St. Louis, under the leadership of Wilson Price Hunt, a native of New Jersey. These Astorians followed the Lewis and Clark trail up the Missouri. The party was guided by Pierre Dorion and his heroic Indian wife.

One day as this second transcontinental band was struggling along the tortuous stream, dragging their old Mackinaw boat through the shifting, savage currents, three men were sighted coming down the river. Were they friends or foes? It did not take long to determine that they were American hunters.

Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson, in a destitute condition, were drifting down the current back to Missouri. Their winter of trapping had been very successful; but just as they were getting ready to embark with their load of rich furs, the Indians had plundered their camp. Barely escaping with their lives, the three friends had managed to make their way thus far toward home.

It was a mutually welcome meeting in the wilds. The Astorians had food and other supplies sorely needed by the hunters. They in turn had valuable information to give to the overland party. One thing of special interest was the fact that they had found a shorter and easier way through the Rockies than the Lewis and Clark trail.



A glimpse of Teton Pass in winter. Through this mountain way the Astorians, led by Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson, found a shorter way to the Pacific.

Would the hunters guide the overland party along the new way? They agreed to do so if the Astorians would outfit them again for another winter of hunting and trapping. So the bargain was struck and the Kentucky hunters once more turned west to pilot the party up the Yellowstone across the Wind River Range, down the Hoback River, and on through the Teton Pass to the Snake River country.

It was this journey that brought such noble mountains as the Tetons first to the American notice. And in honor of the leader of the Astorians this most scenic of American routes through the Rockies was named "Hunt's Pass." It held the name for many a year, but finally it was lost when Jefferson Hunt's great deeds, like those of Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson, fell into the dust of forgetfulness.

At the post on Henry's Fork they parted from their Astorian friends. Taking the supplies given them, Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson struck out again into the haunts

of the fur-bearing animals. Their plan was to load up again with skins, and get back to St. Louis as early the next spring as they could. One of the Astorian party, a partner in the enterprise, by the name of Miller, who had tired of the rough mountain life, decided to go with the three hunters. He felt that with them he could get back home more quickly.

Mr. Hunt led the rest of his little band towards the Pacific. As the party journeyed along through the Snake River valley, troubles began to multiply. To the far-away Blue Mountains in Oregon the distance seemed endless; and when they finally reached these, the fall snows had made the way most difficult. The worn-out men could hardly battle on across this last barrier to the Columbia; but they kept up the struggle until finally they won.

Pierre Dorion's Indian wife proved herself a heroine in the face of all the terrible hardships. She had not only herself but two children to care for. On the journey also she gave birth to a babe. It died a few days later; yet with remarkable courage and strength the brave mother went on with her other little ones to the end of the trail.

At last the haggard band reached the Columbia and floated on rafts down the river to Astoria. A second trail had been blazed by Americans across the continent.



The starving Kentucky hunters are found on the banks of the Snake River by the returning Astorians.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDING THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST

NAKED, bereft, and despoiled of everything that a pillager would care to take away with him, four Americans hid themselves in the willows along the Snake River, where it rolls along in brawling turbulence toward its junction with the mighty Columbia.

From their hiding place they cast fish lines made from the hair of horses' tails into the stream, hoping thus to keep body and soul together for another few days at least.

Stripped of all their worldly goods on the eastern slope of the Rockies, these men had retreated several hundred miles across the mountains and down the watercourses leading to the Pacific. During this terrible journey they had seen no white man and hardly an Indian, for they had tried their best to leave no trace behind as they traveled.

In the midst of their fishing, as they worked away with lines and willow rods, came a shout from the bank above; another party of Americans had caught sight of these naked fishermen.

"Hello, you!" was the most welcome call. Much of the warp and woof of later American history was to be woven out of this chance meeting. This fortunate incident occurred on August 20, 1812.

Who were these destitute fishermen? They were our old friends Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson; and with them was Joseph Miller, who had left the overland Astorian party in hopes of an early return to St. Louis.

When the Kentucky hunters with their St. Louis companion heard words called out from others in their own language for the first time in a year, they scrambled up out of the willows to see what it was all about.

Gazing in wonderment from the bank above were their old companions, waiting to greet them. These were Ramsay Crooks and Robert McClellan, whom the three hunters a year before had piloted across the Teton pass of the Rockies with the overland Astorians. There was also Benjamin Jones, a hunter like themselves. And besides these were two Frenchmen, André Valle and François Leclaire, types of the sturdy woodsmen who had borne the burdens for all the overland explorers in the Northwest.

In charge of the eastward-riding party was David Stuart, a Scotchman who with his uncle had gone around Cape Horn in Mr. Astor's ship, *Tonquin*. Like Miller, Stuart was a partner in the Astorian enterprise. Naturally these two men had much to talk about, here on the banks of the Snake, as to the success of the enterprise.

"What has happened to you?" the three ragged fishermen asked.

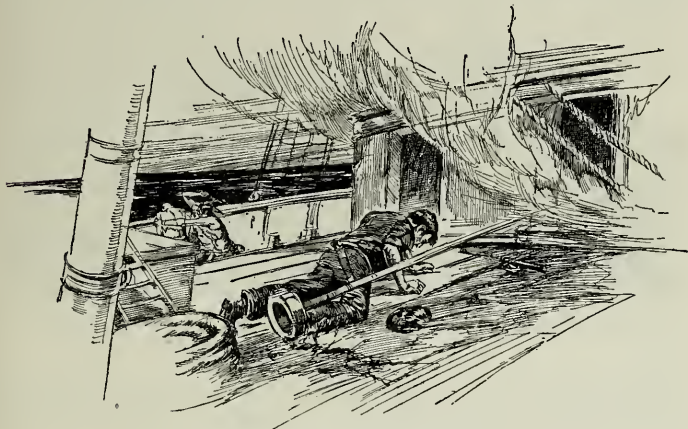
The Astorians explained that they were now a detachment of message bearers, bound for the pass in the Rockies through which Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson had guided them when they were westward bound under Mr. Hunt.

They were now returning, they said, to make a report to Mr. Astor at New York, of all that had happened on the Columbia.

First of all, they had to tell of the safe arrival of the ship *Tonquin*, and the founding of Astoria. Then they had the story of the overland Astorians, who had straggled in, a few at a time, until at last all but a group of Canadians, who had remained in the mountains, had reported at the company's post.

The next item of news was one of disaster. It had to do with the fate of the *Tonquin*. Stuart explained that this

good ship had gone up by Vancouver's Island to trade, and had there been set upon by natives. They had brought



The massacre on the Tonquin.

bales of furs aboard to trade, in each of which many knives were hid. Then, at a whooping signal, the Indians had seized the knives and had massacred all on board, save one who had crawled to the powder magazine, mortally wounded, but with life enough left splendidly to avenge himself and the crew.

When the Indians swarmed after the massacre to loot the ship, the wounded sailor touched off the powder magazine. The explosion blew him, the ship, and all the Indian pillagers, of whom several hundred were aboard, into atoms.

Stuart also told of the behavior of the Northwest Fur Company in the face of American competition. The Astorians, on setting out up the Columbia to trade, had found signs posted at important river junctions. They were the work of Thompson, the Northwest Company's



The three Teton—famous landmarks for the Western trail blazers.

official explorer, who had made a desperate race with the Americans to be first on the Columbia. These were his notices of possession.

On his arrival at the mouth of the Columbia, however, Thompson found a surer emblem of authority. The American flag was fluttering over Astoria, and Astorian hunters and traders were setting out for points in the interior, paying no heed to Thompson's presumptuous signs.

Neither Stuart and his party, nor Miller and his three companions knew of another important event, just then happening. This was the breaking out of the War of 1812. The young Astorian settlement, through the misfortunes of this war, was soon to pass temporarily into the hands of the British. The Northwest Company then was to have its brief day of triumph.

Stuart thought he was carrying home messages that on the whole told of success. He proposed that the emaciated hunters feed well on his supplies, accept gifts of clothing from his men, and join the party in trailing back through the Teton to the Wind and Big Horn river.

"Oh, no!" the Kentuckians and Miller replied; "we have found a much easier pass." Then they explained how in their year of wanderings they had found the great open way to the West. South of the Teton route the Wind River mountains come to a bold stop, with high bluffs at their termination.

"Beyond these craggy bluffs," they explained, "is a rolling plain that slopes gently up to the crest of the continent. The pass does not seem to be in the mountains; it offers a smooth trail with no hard climbing. It is better and nearer than the Teton Pass, and leads more directly to St. Louis."

The returning Astorians — the first message bearers across America — listened with intense interest to this tale of the South Pass. The three hunters told all that had befallen them in the year. They said that after parting from the Astorians the year before at Henry's Fort they had followed the Rockies south for about 200 miles. There, they reported, they had found a river which did not flow to the Columbia but made its way to the sea, they thought, south of the Columbia watershed.

The Kentucky hunters were guessing, now, as the Spaniards had, at the waterways of the "Northern Mystery." The river they were describing was one of the principal streams in that unknown region. Later it was given the name it still carries, Bear River, by a Scotch fur trader; but no white man knew then that this river flows into the Great Salt Lake, not into the ocean.

Up the Snake a little way, the hunters said, a stream would be found which would lead the way to this mysterious stream of the mountains. They suggested that all go to this stream together. Trailing along it and over the eastern rim of the Bear River valley, they could find this easiest of passes through the Rockies.

The only danger on this route, the three hunters and Miller agreed, was the lurking robbers, the Arapahoes, who lay in wait for people they could plunder, on the eastern slopes of the Rockies.

The hunters told of trying to escort Mr. Miller toward St. Louis by going 200 miles east from the Bear River. Here their packs of beaver had been stolen by the Arapahoe robbers. They told also of trapping on Missouri River waters, until they were again loaded, and a second time robbed, pillaged, not only of their furs but of their traps, clothing, and guns.

Thus reduced to dire poverty, they had retreated through their newly discovered pass in the Rockies to the point on the westward-flowing Snake where Stuart and his man had just found them.

Would the Astorian messengers risk the dangers from the Arapahoes and try the new route? They agreed to do it.

But first some caches made by Hunt when westbound must be visited, and a trapping outfit secured from them for the three Kentuckians.

Up the Snake went the combined parties until they reached a place with a Scotch name, "Caldron Linn." It was here in the mad waters the westbound Hunt had been wrecked while trying to proceed in canoes down a river never meant for such navigation. The Scotchmen, Crooks and McClellan, on this second visit, called it "Caldron Linn," or "Boiling Pool." At the foot of a precipice and on the banks here were their five caches in which valuable goods for barter had been left.

Crooks and McClellan led the way to the caches, but they found the Indian had an eagle eye for goods deposited, Indian-fashion, in a cache. Indians had been there before the returning whites, and had pillaged three of the

five holes. Later, Americans, with more experience, made it their business to conceal the caches by burning fires over them, and carrying away all removed earth. They soon learned by severe lessons one of the chief arts of mountaineering.

In the remaining caches enough material was found to outfit the Kentucky hunters. The call of the mountains was in their blood. With supplies again in hand, they lost any homesickness they had had for the states. Hoback, Reznor, and Robinson bade their companions good-by again and struck off into the wilds — wilds that soon were to lure them to their heroic deaths.

Stuart and his aids, guided by Miller, started south for the Great Basin's rim and the valley of the Bear River. They were heading for the South Pass, destined soon to be a mighty nation-building gateway between the East and the Far West.

An Indian whom the Astorians found spearing salmon at the Fishing Falls of the Snake had told Stuart of this pass. Stuart offered the Indian "a pistol, a blanket of blue cloth, an ax, an awl, a fathom of beads, a looking-glass, and a little powder and ball" to guide him to it. The Indian, crying joyfully that buffalo meat was better than fish, said that he would go. But he had joined the camp only to disappear between midnight and dawn with his own horse and eight of the best of his employer's.

The act had shaken Stuart's faith in Indians and Indian tales of the pass. But now, with an American guide and a description of this mountain pass from the lips of his own countrymen, the Scotch leader felt no more hesitation. He struck out boldly from the Snake to the southward, abandoning the Teton route by which the westward-bound Astorians had crossed over.

His way led directly into the land the Spaniards had

called "The Northern Mystery." The Astorians, however, came down upon it from the north in search of beaver streams and a way home to Missouri; the Spaniards had come upon it from the south in search of silver mines and a way to new Spanish settlements in California. Both groups penetrated the mystery realm but neither solved its secrets. Silver and gold had played their rôle as a lure to adventure. The work of the beaver lure was now at hand.





Stuart drew his pistol.

CHAPTER SIX

A GLIMPSE INTO THE MYSTERY LAND

INTO this hidden realm came our message bearers, thus making themselves the forerunners of the Pony Express, whose bold riders became famous later over these same hard trails.

They struck straight for the pass in the mountains that was to open the homeward route for them. Their route led southeastward at first up the valley of the Snake, then turned south along the Portneuf, and at last carried them over the Basin's rim into the land that has no outlet to the sea.

They came upon a river which Miller, their guide, recognized as one whose upper reaches he had seen before in company with Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson. He felt sure it reached the ocean somewhere south of the Columbia. They named it Miller's River in his honor. But this name it was not destined to retain, for America had a precarious foothold here and fur traders of the great Hudson's Bay Company were covetous. Soon men of this company were to overrun this country and leave the name Bear River

upon this delightful mountain stream as a lasting memento of their invasion of Uncle Samuel's Land of Destiny.

Stuart wrote of the event: "We passed through a gap in the mountains to the left, and it soon brought us upon the opposite descent. Here we discovered an extensive plain lying before us. Through this we steered due east, and in eighteen miles struck a river running through an apparently level country in about a south direction. This Mr. Miller at once pronounced the stream on which he made his last fall hunt. This river is 100 yards wide and is here confined between a high, rocky, bluff bank, and a hill partially covered with trees of pine.

"It at present appears no more the asylum of the ingenious beaver than does the most bleak summit of the Cordilleras.

"The prairie here being burnt smooth we were obliged (although it was now dusk) to proceed two miles farther east ere we could find grass enough to satisfy our hungry horses. We camped for the night, having come in all this day forty-two miles nearly east."

This second record of white men's entering the Mystery Land was made on September 9, 1812 — almost exactly thirty-six years after Father Escalante had penetrated the region. Hoback, Rezner, Robinson, and Miller, however, by Stuart's own record, had found the way the fall before, in 1811. The Kentucky hunters and their St. Louis companion were the first Americans to enter the realm.

As Stuart and his followers lay down to rest that night by the unexplored river, they speculated as to where it reached the sea. Of the Great Salt Lake they did not even guess, though it lay only a short distance away.

"A plain lodge trace is our guide," wrote Stuart as he arose the next morning, "and it shall be our defense until we reach that part of the river Mr. Miller explored."



Bear River, one of the streams of the Northern Mystery Land.

So they set off up Bear River, and not down it, whither a journey of a day or two would have made them the discoverers of America's great inland sea.

They started up the river — but they did not go very far. They reached a spot where the soil was saturated with river seepage, and grass grew in great abundance. It was the same native meadow where Oregon emigrants many years later rested after the hard, bleak journey westward across the rugged crest of the continent.

From an equally hard journey eastward over the volcanic and sage-spread plains of Oregon and Idaho, these adventurers now reveled in the deep grass and watched their travel-worn horses gain fresh vigor.

A goose flew overhead — probably bound for what are now the famous breeding grounds in the marshy Bear River bottoms near the Great Salt Lake. The hunters shot — and missed it. A black bear sniffed about the newcomers' camp, as if anxious to find what this strange intrusion meant. The hunters attacked it — but they

expected grizzly grit instead of black-bear cunning. It ran off while they were waiting for it to stand as the grizzly generally did, ready to strike or hug the hunter to death unless he was quick enough to send a ball into its heart.

"Our success is bad in the extreme among the land inhabitants," wrote Stuart; "and our almost only recourse for food is the produce of our fishing rods, which is poor trout and a species of sucker which is really excellent, called by the Virginians the 'stone-toater.'"

Poor explorers! They had been accustomed to the salmon trout of the Pacific and they did not know about the smaller, gamier, more delicious trout of the mountain streams. Many a boy of the Bear River country today tells about these gamiest of fish, in a different tone of voice from that Stuart used when he referred to them as "poor trout." But he will have to be forgiven — he judged by size!

For three days the Astorians lingered in the pleasant Bear River country. But they found to their dismay that others also thought it a good country.

Not having seen any human beings, they had relaxed their care, and on the evening of September 12, all went together down to the mountain stream near the camp to fish. They had at this time followed the meanderings of the main river about fifty-four miles from the spot they first encountered it, and had gone farther eastward up a branch, about nine miles from its junction with the main river.

When the seven white men returned from their fishing they found Indians in possession of their camp. They saw Indians to the right of them and to the left of them. They were trapped and were helpless. The uninvited guests were not Indians of that region, but were a raiding party

of Crows out for pillage. The whites were at a keen disadvantage, for the Indians already had their camp in their hands.

Stuart, trained in the Northwest Company's way of dealing with the canoe-bred river Indians of the north, was not prepared to handle with despatch the born pillagers of the Rockies. He hesitated and parleyed.

On the morning of Sunday, September 13, the whites attempted to start. But the giant Crow chief seized Stuart as he sat in the saddle, and lifted him forward. He jerked the horse's rein, trying to throw the rider. Stuart drew his pistol — but did not fire. The chief received this as a deadly insult. Yet with Indian cunning, he postponed the day of accounting, and tried to laugh it off.

He had demanded gunpowder. Stuart had refused. But in parting, to avoid an open break, Stuart relented and gave the chief twenty loads. He then noticed that most of the cooking implements of the camp had been skillfully stolen even while the whites stood on guard, with guns in their hands.

Things now changed for the Americans in a most disastrous way. They knew they had insulted and offended an Indian force large enough to annihilate them. This force was at large and might fall upon them at any minute. Any lingering doubt as to their peril was dispelled when they saw smoke fires arising from every high peak — the signal fires by which the crafty Indians called their kind to battle.

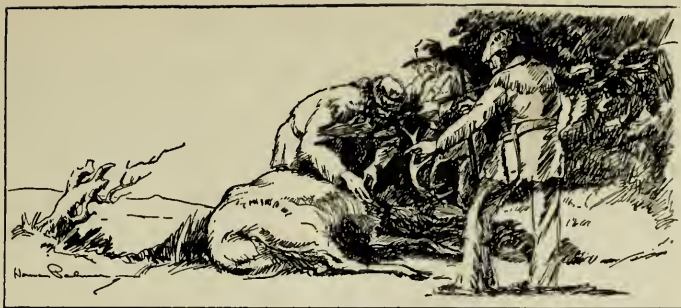
The Americans held a conference of war. Miller thought that a course north of east would lead them to the part of Bear River he had followed up toward the pass in the Rockies which was their goal. They broke into the hills for a ten-mile dash with no river or trail to guide them. As the fires continued on the mountains, they knew In-

dian spies were close upon their trail. They turned north along a branch of Bear River and followed it fifteen miles to a good place to camp, after their exhausting race for life.

Within the mountains at daybreak the next day they tried to secrete themselves and at the same time to hide their trail. They crossed a ridge to the right. Eighteen miles ahead they encountered a river running due north. It was the Salt River — a branch of the Snake.

They had penetrated the Great Basin, and were now out of it again, over its northeastern rim. They had found the part of the Bear River along which the Oregon emigrants would soon be streaming in their ox-drawn wagons. They had been given a glimpse of the land of the Northern Mystery. The task still was ahead of them to find the open way through the Rockies on the road home.





"In the elk's side was a bullet they had not fired."

CHAPTER SEVEN

UNHORSED IN A WILDERNESS

FATE was leading the footsteps of this party of message-bearing Astorians toward an accomplishment of international importance — the opening of the Great Way to the West. This did not mean that their way was to be smooth and easy.

Three of the Snake tribe came into their camp, but the mere mention by the whites of the Crow marauders caused these Indians to flee for their lives. Stuart and his companions also decided it was best to put as many miles as possible between themselves and the hostile visitors they had left behind on Bear River. But they little realized the persistence of Indian trackers when after a worthwhile chance to loot.

They had expected to encounter the mysterious river leading to the South Pass again. Instead they encountered the Snake, which they knew as the "Mad River," from the way it boiled and foamed along its course where Hunt's party of westbound Astorians had abandoned the canoes in which they had tried to navigate it.

For a whole week they fled, thus hoping to get away from Indian dangers. On the morning of September 19, while they were resting in a country where beaver streams abounded on all sides, down came the Indian pursuers. Fortunately we have the very words of Stuart to give us the picture of what happened.

"We were all up soon after the dawn," he wrote, "and I had just reached the river bank when I heard the Indian yell raised in the vicinity of camp, and the cry, 'To Arms! To Arms! There's Indians!' echoed by all our party.

"We had just time to snatch up our arms when two Indians at full gallop passed within 300 yards of our station driving off every horse we had.

"Towards them we rushed, and got within shot of the nearest when repeated yells in the direction from which they came made us desist from pursuit in order to defend ourselves and our baggage. For there being only two Indians after the horses, we imagined the main body were in reserve to attack our rear, or to plunder the camp if opportunity offered.

"At the rate the horses were going all attempts to rejoin them were unavailing, and had we pursued further everything else would have been lost to a certainty.

"The savages, whose yells made us return to our baggage, passed soon after in the others' tracks, and we could discover that the whole war party amounted to not more than twenty. Had we known it only a few minutes sooner, a few horses might have been saved and a scalp or two fallen into our hands.

"From the few words we heard, they were beyond doubt the Absoraka nation (the Crows) and we believe the band we met on Miller's river. On the whole, it was one of the most intrepid actions I have ever heard of among Indians and convinced me how determined they were on having

our horses, for which they would unquestionably have followed us any distance.

"We busied ourselves all morning making preparations to set out on foot down the river, along the plains of which below Henry's Fort we have hopes of meeting with some of the Snakes, from whom, if we can procure a couple of horses, we shall continue our journey and if possible reach the Cheyenne river before winter sets in.

"But if we fail in this our second plan will be to reach the Spanish river and winter there. We have just food enough for one meal, and only with confidence in the inscrutable ways of Providence to send us on our road but to subsist from day to day ——"

Stuart did not make his last sentence clear! No wonder; for he had reached an hour of trial that would break any but the stoutest heart. Even when most completely dismayed he still talked of finding horses, and pressing on. Hope of completing the journey that season was all that he was ready to abandon.

Jones, the Kentucky hunter, did not share Stuart's ideas of tactics. When they had the first trouble with these Crow thieves, Jones had leveled his gun and would have fired at the chief of the hostiles, had Stuart not cried out to him, "By heaven, if you fire I'll blow your brains out!"

Jones and Stuart belonged to two entirely different schools of tactics, in the matter of Indian warfare. Jones never got over regretting that he had let the insolent horse-stealers get away scot-free. His kind in after years never did so when they could help it.

How to get a horse was the first problem of the unhorsed travelers. Jones caught them a meal in an old beaver trap. While doing it he saw on heights around them skulking figures which any one but a trained mountaineer

would have taken for wolves. He knew they were Indians watching eagerly to see where the white men hid their goods.



"Jones caught them a meal in an old beaver trap."

Some caches already had been made when Jones announced his discovery. They were dug up at once and a mighty bonfire was kindled that night on that lonely western spur of the Rockies. All that would burn they destroyed, all that would not burn they threw into the brawling waters of the "Mad River."

After a ten-mile march on Sunday, September 20, they fished for their supper. Their catch was forty fine trout. In these prolific waters the fishing always has been good.

The Canadians in the party had, of course, no heart to walk while a stream on which they could drift along was at their side. These inveterate boatmen made two rafts, and the party took to the water, with four men on one raft and three on the other. They hoped all would be easy sailing now until they should find some Indian encampment with horses for sale.

But they were doomed to disappointment. From Sunday to Friday they drifted quietly downstream, killing some game on the shores. Then, on an island, one of the hunters wounded an elk. It plunged into the water and

swam a mile downstream before the rafts were poled and paddled alongside and it was dragged ashore.

On stopping to skin their elk, the trailed hunters made a discovery as startling as it was full of dismay for them. In the elk's side was a bullet they had not fired; and near it was an arrow point. Both were lying in fresh wounds. As the Snakes were not armed with rifles they concluded the Blackfeet had been here — and that within a very short time.

After rafting along another day they concluded they were near the plain on which Henry's Fort had been built. We now know this plain as the lower valley of the Teton River. They landed, and started again to the eastward on foot with each man carrying a 200-pound load of luggage! It was a disheartening prospect surely that these victims of the wilderness faced.

Fall storms were coming on. They crossed the Teton valley, trailed south along the base of the mountains, and began to go to pieces. McClellan suffered from his aching, bleeding feet until he ceased to care whether he lived or died. He cast off his pack and refused to carry the beaver trap — their most dependable means of gaining food. Crooks fell ill of fever, and some wanted to go on without him.

They killed a grizzly bear. That helped a little. When Crooks was free of his fever, they pressed on up a creek coming down from a gap in the Teton Mountains. Where it forked they camped on the night of October 6.

Next morning they were up bright and early, climbing for the summit of the Teton Pass. This would lead them down into Jackson's Hole and up the Hoback river route to the Missouri's upper branches.

McClellan fell away, making his own route, and traveling without baggage other than his gun. The six others

crossed the shallow channels of the Snake, gained Hoback's river — and saw McClellan far off on the horizon. They pressed on nineteen miles due east, and found they had to climb the divide leading into the valley of the Green or Spanish River.

They came upon a deserted campfire — McClellan's. Their food was gone. They were in their worst predicament on the whole journey, for now they faced a winter in a gameless mountain waste, and were already weakened almost to the point of exhaustion.

In the distance they sighted a fire, which they thought meant an Indian camp. But they no longer feared Indians. They sent Le Claire, one of the Canadians, to negotiate with the supposed red man. He was gone a day, and returned with the news that he had found McClellan on a bed of straw, and in a mood to die there, declaring his feet were so sore he could walk no further!

In these sad straits they struggled on until they reached their companion. Cheering McClellan as only the most heroic of souls could do, they tied up his bundle and started on their way across the mountainous Green River valley. At least it lay toward the rising sun and home.

Good luck at last awaited them, for here they found some buffalo bulls. The rifles of the Kentucky hunters were soon joyously at work, and these riflemen were not bred to miss their prey. Wednesday, October 14, they spent drying meat, and resting and feasting, and with full stomachs their courage began to come back to them.

Far to the southeast they saw a great mountain. A little study taught them more of the secrets of the Rockies that were to count most for their countrymen. They noticed all the buffalo hoofprints were pointed south. The fall migration of the herds to softer southern climates was on.

They too would go south, along the path of the buffalo. Stuart wrote that their decision was to go "at least to the point of a mountain we can see near which we expect finding the waters of the Missouri."

The "point of the mountain" they could see was the point that in later years cheered the pioneers on their way to Oregon, to Utah, and to California in the days of '49. It was the point where the Wind River chain suddenly terminates in a high, bold bluff, and switches off to the northeast to divide the waters of the Big Horn from those of the Little Missouri and the Cheyenne.

With lighter hearts the explorers continued on their way toward this mountain. They had sighted an easier pathway home. And there were buffalo, antelope, big-horn sheep, and fish in the Green River to encourage them with the hope they would always find a way to live. Even McClellan recovered from his terrible attack of dismay as they went hopefully down the Spanish, or Green River valley, toward the gateway of the West.





The first American-led beast of burden to go through the South Pass.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TRAILING HOMEWARD THROUGH THE SOUTH PASS

EVERY one remembers the famous cry of the King who, when hard pressed, called out, "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse." Those who stop to consider the plight of these Astorian message bearers, lost in the mazes of the Rocky Mountains, can guess that they would have been willing to give the Rocky Mountain kingdom for a horse to relieve them on their struggles over these craggy trails.

Imagine, then, their joy when they came suddenly upon a camp of friendly Indians, who had a horse, and were ready to sell it for articles which Stuart could provide!

The horse was a decrepit old animal — so poor that Indian marauders who had despoiled this particular camp would not drive it off. Nevertheless, it was a horse, and it could carry meat, and camp equipage. Perhaps the

fact that Stuart and his companions obtained this horse accounts for their final winning of their way home.

Their adventure of the purchased horse began Thursday, October 15. On this day they slept late after their Rocky Mountain feast of the day before. As strength came to overtired muscles they began again to laugh. They laughed especially at one of the Canadians who had come to Stuart, rifle in hand, during the worst hour of their suffering, and had proposed that they cast lots to see who should die to serve as food for the others. They laughed at the queer proviso the Canadian had made to gain acceptance of his proposal. It was that if Stuart would only consent to this casting of lots, he should be exempted, and be assured a meal from the flesh of one of his fellows.

Stuart's answer in that hour of general despair was to cock his rifle and tell the bewildered man that if anybody was to die it would be he who had made this diabolical proposal. Whereupon the Frenchman had fallen to his knees and had implored forgiveness.

Now, with buffalo meat a plenty, the forgiveness sought was extended by all.

As pleasantly they wandered on their way they encountered a huge Indian lodge, the significance of which it has never yet been permitted white men to learn in full. The lodge consisted of twenty trees, each twelve inches in diameter and forty feet high, arranged as lodge poles. Over them was thrown a layer of brush, and hanging inside were scores of pairs of baby-size moccasins. Outside, facing the door, were buffalo skulls painted black, and four graves, each marked by a cedar post. They had come upon a "medicine lodge" where were carried on the most secret religious ceremonials connected with the worship of the Great Spirit.

With a supply of buffalo meat on their backs, they trudged on for three days; and then came a beautiful Sunday morning. They were cutting across now toward the mountain, and had left the main valley of the Green River. A creek led up toward the mountain, and this they followed. All at once, on rounding a bend, they came upon six Indians, in as dire need almost as the whites themselves.

It was a band of Shoshones, or Snakes. They had just enjoyed a successful buffalo hunt east of the Rockies. After the hunt they had met with pillagers and had been despoiled of all their kill.

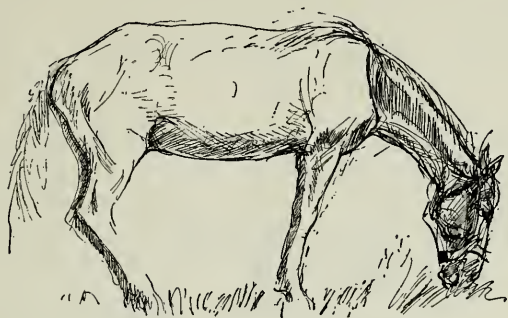
The Americans had no inclination to hurry on past these friends. Especially were they anxious to trade for the one precious horse they possessed. The Indians were loath to part with the animal, of course; but Stuart bid up the price until he had offered a pistol, some cloth, an ax, a knife, a tin cup, two awls, and some other trinkets. At this the Indians made the "swap."

Our adventurers could now march on, without longer making beasts of burden of themselves. They spent the rest of Sunday here, however, celebrating their good fortune, encamped near their Shoshone hosts.

Early on Monday the white men loaded on the old nag all their belongings except their blankets and rifles. Relieved of their extra luggage, they made faster time. Three miles brought them to a Crow trail along which sixty lodges had passed. They followed its direction, to the northeast, but they did so cautiously, as they feared it would bring them upon a war party. After twelve miles, they turned off to the southeast, and that night slept for the last time on the Pacific slope of the Rockies.

"After sunrise," wrote Stuart on Tuesday, October 20, "we set out on a southeast course for eighteen miles,

through an undulating country with the main mountains on our left and a considerable ridge on our right.



"The horse was a decrepit old animal."

"The ridge of mountains which divides Wind River from the Columbia and Spanish waters ends here abruptly. . . . On Spanish River, so far as we could see yesterday, the country appeared almost dead level, bounded on the west by a range of very high mountains running about south-west, and on the east by a ridge to the right of the country through which we pass today.

"We abandoned the Crow trace, as it bore north of east, for according to information obtained from the Shoshones, they (the Crows) are on a river at no great distance to the east, which is no doubt the source of the Spanish river waters in this quarter.

"Our right hand ridge becoming very low we passed over into a low plain and eight miles to the southeast brought us to a camp in an indifferent growth of sage which proved an unsuccessful competitor against the piercing northeaster of this evening. We were obliged to take refuge in our nests at an early hour."

The explorers were now in the flat country at the top of the continent. McClellan celebrated his return to good



spirits by killing a buffalo bull among the drains and small watercourses of this flat, sand-blown area.

Making fifteen miles eastward next day, they pitched camp among some aspen trees that would make good firewood and thus protect them from the piercing cold. It was a dry camp, however, without a drop of water in sight. The two Canadians wandered a mile and a half away and found a little pool; but it was alkaline.

On Thursday morning they had to leave camp break-fastless. There was no water in which to cook their buffalo meat or to drink with a broiled feast. Moving on for five miles, they found a stream beside which they stopped to eat. In another ten miles was the dry course of another stream. It was running eastward — the first eastward-running watercourse they had found in these wastes.

Stuart noted that it ran through banks of a loose, bluish earth, apparently strangely impregnated with Copperas.

It was the wonder-colored earth that had given the Yellowstone, in this same mountain area, its name.

"Pursuing our course five miles among these drains," wrote Stuart, "we at last found a little water oozing out of the earth. It was of a whitish color and possessed a great similarity of taste to the muddy waters of the Missouri.

"Here we camped after coming twenty miles over broken ground whose soil was principally sand and gravel covered with a little grass, some sage and some salt wood."

On Friday the 23rd, these travelers from the Pacific saw as far as the eye could reach the water and wind-carved plains of the Missouri drainage basin. It was a most welcome, wondrous view. They knew now they were through with mountain perils — and thought they were safely on the road home.

The only question was where to find the streams that Hunt and his men had passed when westward bound — the waters of the Big Horn and the Cheyenne. These they knew led downward to the great Missouri. Surely they would soon come upon these homeward flowing rivers.

From the open prairie the Astorian message bearers turned toward a mountain visible sixty miles away to the northeast. They hoped there to find a river leading to the Missouri. How they found a tributary of the Platte, Stuart records in his diary:

"We discovered to our great joy," he wrote on October 27, "a river with muddy banks and a great abundance of willows running with a considerable body of water." It was none other than the Sweetwater, much beloved by all Far Western pioneers.

They trailed on down the Sweetwater, over the course of the Utah and Oregon trails of later years, encountering

Independence Rock and the famous Devil's Gate. They named the splendid natural formation of the Upper Platte Canyon the "Fiery Narrows," for "canyon" as a word had not yet been borrowed from the Spaniards.

The river before them they thought was the Cheyenne, but later they concluded that it was not. No matter what it was, they felt that following it would only lead them into the midst of hostile Indians. The hostiles, they believed, had now quit the elevated plains near the Rockies for the winter; so they set about building a winter home.

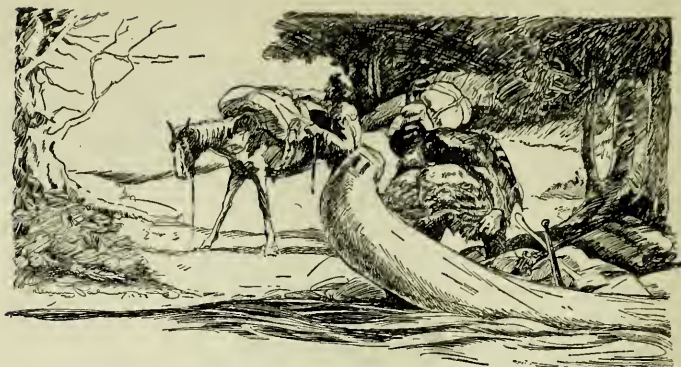
One day while this work was in progress, Crooks, wandering a little way from camp without his gun, came upon a mother grizzly with two cubs. There was no tree he could climb, so he fell flat and feigned death, but he kept one eye open to watch closely the grizzly's actions. Luckily she had gorged herself on the buffaloes Stuart and his men had slain, so she grunted and turned off into the willow with her cubs instead of slaying this most useful of American pathfinders.

The wilderness now was ringing with the sound of axes for the first time in this region. Soon trees enough had been laid on top of each other to make a cabin eighteen feet long by six feet high, and eight feet in width. Buffalo skins, obtained in a grand hunt near the river, covered the top, except a hole out of which the smoke from their fire in the center of the dirt floor could escape.

Elk, deer, mountain sheep, and buffalo all fell in abundance now at each foray of the hunters. They hung the rafters of their cabin heavily with meat, and dried the skins for moccasins, shirts, and trousers. They reveled in abundance and celebrated their good luck by naming their winter habitation — the first house ever built within the limits of the present state of Wyoming — the Château of Indolence.

Here was a thought also to comfort them: They had at least crossed the continental divide, and were well along the overland trail on their way toward home. Their castle stood within a bend of the river opposite what has since been called Poison Spider Creek.





"They loaded the old Shoshone horse again and took the land trail."

CHAPTER NINE

CARRYING A MESSAGE TO AMERICA

FOR many years historians have made guesses as to who first proclaimed to America the existence of the mountain pass through which Americans moved out to possess Oregon, California, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada.

A good friend wrote upon the tombstone of Jim Bridger, "discoverer in 1823, of the South Pass." Many have claimed that Etienne Provot, from whom Provo City, Utah takes its name, was the first to find this gateway. Others have given the credit to William Sublette, who gave his name to the Sublette Cut-off on the Oregon Trail leading from the South Pass westward to the Bear River. Fitzpatrick, one of Ashley's mountaineers, has also been given the honor, and even Fremont has been hailed as the discoverer of this gateway to the West.

But all these historians have erred, and none of them has ever guessed at Hoback, Rezner and Robinson and Miller as the real discoverers of the pass. Only a few have suspected that Stuart and his party came back from Astoria that way.

But as we now accompany our explorers on their journey back to St. Louis and New York, and note the subsequent work of Ramsay Crooks in Washington, as the first lobbyist in favor of taking Oregon for America, we shall see how they made the existence of this pass south of the Wind River mountains known to one and all, before any of the later mountaineers to whom the honor of finding it has been accorded ever came into the Rockies.

No one at first attached much significance to the reports of the Stuart party. In later years, however, when the great pass became a deciding factor in the destiny of the Western empire, the question regarding its discoverer arose and until Stuart's diary was rescued from oblivion it was not satisfactorily answered.

We left our happy hunters in their winter camp, so sadly misnamed by them the Château of Indolence. From their dream of a winter's peace they were rudely awakened on the morning of December 10.

As Stuart wrote: "We were astonished and confounded at hearing the savage yelp early this morning in the vicinity of our hut. Seizing our arms we rushed out when twenty-three Arapahoes made their appearance.

"After the first surprise was over, they advanced in a friendly manner, telling us they were on a war excursion against the Absorakas (Crows) who had stolen a great part of their horses and taken a great number of their women prisoners and were on a river six days march to the northward. There they were going in the hope of obtaining revenge."

How had the Indians found this sheltered retreat? An Indian made a very simple explanation. They had heard a shot, and had hunted until they found the remains of a slain deer. Then they trailed the hunter's footsteps until they came to his cabin!

The whites had become too confident in their Château of Indolence. Now they were to pay dearly for leaving open trails behind them in their daily excursions after game. They could not kill the intruders so they fed them a great feast of their winter provisions, parting even with the best buffalo tongues and deer haunches that they had.

The Indians told them they came from a river to the southward, six days' march. It was no doubt the south fork of the Platte. They drew a map of the watercourses of that section which convinced our travelers they were on a new river different from any they had previously heard of.

When the Indians left after spending a night near the cabin, with their chief sleeping within it in company with the whites, Stuart remembered the treachery of the Crows on Bear River. Miller, too, stirred his fears by declaring these Absorakas to be the same band that had robbed him and his companions, Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson, the year before.

On the morning of the 11th, as soon as the Indians were out of sight, the Astorians fled, leaving their drying meat behind them.

Down the river they went through snowstorms and bad weather, their old Shoshone horse still bearing their burden of meat and provisions. Trees appeared, and they noted they were large enough for canoes. Buffalo herds could be seen in the distance, with horses running among them. They could not catch any horses, however, as the horses had become as wild as the buffaloes.

Christmas Day they did not stop to celebrate; but by December 30 they decided it was safe enough to try another camp for the winter.

They built their hut this time under the river bank. On New Year's Day they celebrated by cutting up Miller's tobacco pouch and smoking this as a substitute

for tobacco. It was the nearest thing to their favorite Virginia leaf they could find. They also had a feast on buffalo tongues. On the second day of the new year, they moved into their new hut. It was near where Wellsville, Nebraska, now stands.

They lived there quietly, except for work on canoes, until March 7, when a northward flight of geese betokened the coming of spring. Unable to understand a river as shallow as the Platte, they pushed off on March 8, hopeful that the worst of their troubles were over.

They fooled themselves, of course, for the Platte was not destined to be conquered by voyageurs in canoes either then or at any other time. Most of the time they had to get out and walk. Then the Americans quit the boats and started walking along the bank.

The Canadians persisted in trying to maneuver the lightened canoes over sandy shallows. After eight miles of futile efforts, they gave it up, loaded the old Shoshone horse with the canoe cargoes and all went trudging down the Platte River trail together. The Astorian message-bearers thus became the first white men to open this part of the Overland Trail to the West.

Some wild geese now were added to their fare. They winged a few of these birds in passage in their northward flight. On the bleak prairie a storm overtook the travelers. Having no other means of shelter they killed buffalo and erected a tent from the hides.

Thus through desolate plains they proceeded for more than 100 miles without seeing a single tree to cheer them. They were glad, however, that they were following their old pack horse instead of trying to proceed by canoe, for the river seemed to get even shallower as they went along their way.

At last they came to a spot where some driftwood they

were gathering for fuel was marked by the strokes of an ax. They had found some recent outpost of civilization!

Cheered to high hopes by these ax marks, they pressed on until they came to a deserted Pawnee hunting camp. Buffalo skulls lay all about, from which the brains had been removed. This indicated that the animals had been killed for use, and not for wanton slaughter.

They found an island many miles long in the Platte. This they decided to be Grand Island. Now they were able to guess for the first time, how far from the Missouri they were. Earlier explorers had found this island about 140 miles up from the mouth of the Platte. A species of grass they had known in the Missouri bottoms still further raised their hopes of approaching home.

A little later they met an Otoe Indian who told of "bad blood" between England and the United States, and of war to the northward. It hardly seemed possible to them that the war had broken out; but the Indian conducted them to his village, where there were two French trappers. These whites, Messrs. Dornin and Roi of St. Louis, confirmed the report that our second war with England — the War of 1812 — was on.

The Astorians now traded their old horse for a canoe the Frenchmen had the Indians construct, and thus passed out of history the first American-led beast of burden to toil along the mountains and plains section of the road to Oregon.

In their canoe Stuart and his men embarked on April 7th. Even with all seven men aboard, the boat with its strong sides of buffalo and elk hides proved able to withstand the current. They made oars for themselves, and after a week's sailing and paddling they moved out at last into the muddy waters of the Missouri.

Here they went along briskly for 200 miles to a deserted

camp, where they found two abandoned canoes. As their own boat was wearing out, they took the larger of the two and proceeded to Fort Osage, where they were given a hearty American welcome by the officer in charge. Eighteen months before, when they were going westward under Hunt, he had wished McClellan and Crooks Godspeed.

From Fort Osage the message bearers steered on downward to St. Louis. There on their arrival on April 30 they were hailed as heroes of the Rockies. They had been ten months in performing the first overland journey along the route of the Oregon and Utah trails.

The story they had to tell, of course, astounded St. Louis. It was the first intelligence the city had had of the success of Hunt's party, of the founding of Astoria, of the loss of the ship *Tonquin*, and of the discovery of the great gateway to the West.

St. Louis, as we shall see, became from now on a national center for news and gossip about the Far West. The next most famous center was Mackinac Island, in the Great Lakes.

To Mackinac Island went Stuart to take command of the interests of John Jacob Astor. With him went all the news of this new route across the Rockies, which traders and trappers were very eager to absorb.

Ramsay Crooks took another course. Disheartened over the lack of interest in the Far West, he went on to Washington. He made his headquarters as a lobbyist at Brown's Hotel, where Representative John Floyd of Virginia and Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri also lived. How Ramsay Crooks exploited his journey through the South Pass to awaken interest in what lay beyond is told in the words of Senator Benton, himself.

"The session of 1820-21 is remarkable," Missouri's famous senator and advocate of American occupation of

the Far West wrote, "as being the first at which any proposition was made in Congress for the occupation and settlement of our territory on the Columbia river — the only part then owned by the United States on the Pacific coast.

"It was made by Dr. Floyd, a representative from Virginia, an ardent man of great ability and decision of character, and, from an early residence in Kentucky, strongly imbued with western feelings. He took up this subject with the energy which belonged to him and it required not only energy but courage to embrace a subject which at the time seemed more likely to bring ridicule than credit on its advocate.

"I had written and published some essays on the subject the year before which he had read. Two gentlemen, Mr. Ramsay Crooks of New York and Mr. Russell Farnham of Massachusetts, were at Washington that winter, and had their quarters at the same hotel (Brown's) where Dr. Floyd and I had ours.

"Their acquaintance was naturally made by Western men like us — in fact I knew them before; and their conversation, rich in information upon a new and interesting country, was eagerly devoured by the ardent spirit of Floyd.

"He resolved to bring forward the question of occupation and did so."

Thus we see the main message brought by these returning Astorians weaving itself into the warp and woof of American life.

Why did prominent men scorn the Far West? The report of Lewis and Clark had terrorized them with its tales of difficult and dangerous precipices in the Rockies, over the edges of which they nearly slipped to their destruction, and tales of murderous Blackfeet lurking there

to murder those who ventured to scale these gloomy heights.

Floyd, with the backing of Ramsay Crooks, now began to throw blasts of oratory at the conception of the Far



Antelope, a Rocky Mountain game animal which was a valuable source of food supply to the early Western explorers.

West preached by those who depended on the Lewis and Clark reports.

On December 20, 1824, while those publicly credited with discovering the wagon route through the Rockies were still absent on their first journey to the Rockies, Floyd had this to say to the House of Representatives:

“Much of the reluctance which is felt by gentlemen arises from a recurrence to the difficulties experienced by Messrs. Lewis and Clark, when visiting that coast. Their difficulties proceeded not from the country but from their entire want of knowledge — which is now possessed, gained

from a residence among the Indian nations who inhabit the country near the Oregon mountains.

"The course now traveled to pass those mountains lies to the south of that formerly traveled, and a journey can be made without meeting any obstructions of a serious character. Most of this information has been imparted to me by Mr. Farnham and Mr. Crooks, gentlemen to whom I am much indebted for many interesting facts relative to this country."

When thirty-two years later, John C. Fremont was running for president, and was being proclaimed as finder of the South Pass, Ramsay Crooks, then a very old man, wrote a letter from New York, repudiating his claim, and wondering when, if ever, history would catch up with the truth of the matter.

Stuart and Ramsay Crooks told their stories. Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson never lived to do so. We have now to look at the mountaineers' fate which overtook them in the Rockies and sealed their lips forever.





“It was Le Clerc, wounded and faint from the loss of blood.”

CHAPTER TEN

AN INDIAN HEROINE'S STORY

IF it had not been for the bravery and the undying love of a squaw for her children, we should be compelled today to record that shortly after the three Kentucky hunters, Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson, had solved the most important secret of the Rocky Mountains, and had given the key of the puzzle to their countrymen, they were absorbed completely in the wilderness.

When we last took notice of these three intrepid hunters, they were at the “Caldron Linn,” on the Snake River, refusing to yield to the importuning of Stuart, Crooks, and McClellan that they return with them to “the states.” After the hunters turned back into the wilderness with the horses, guns, and traps which Stuart furnished them, they were not heard from again for a year and a half.

While Stuart and his companions were making their way slowly through the mountains homeward, the three Kentuckians trapped on tributaries of the Snake. They were later joined by Astorians under an honest Irishman, John Reed. During the fall of 1813 and the ensuing winter, the three Kentuckians trapped and hunted with this party.

Reed should have returned to Astoria early in 1814. He was doubly wanted there because the establishment had been sold out to the Northwesters of Canada. John George M'Tavish, who had come from Montreal up the Saskatchewan with news that the British and Americans were at war, had bought Astoria from his old friend and companion, Donald McDougal.

McDougal, one of the Canadians employed by Mr. Astor, was in temporary charge during the absence of Mr. Hunt on an expedition to Alaska. On selling out, McDougal arranged that Americans should go overland with the Northwesters' express to Montreal on the opening of the mountain passes in 1814.

When they were all ready to depart, Reed was still missing, and for the very good reason that he with Pierre Dorion and our Kentucky companions lay murdered and scalped on the banks of the Boise River, Idaho. These men were the first white victims of an Indian massacre west of the Rockies.

It must have been a startling experience that greeted the red warrior who stealthily slipped up to the body of Robinson, the veteran of Kentucky's Bloody Ground, to find no scalp on this fallen hero's head. Instead the Snake found only a handkerchief fluttering above the bare spot where he had expected to lift the scalp of his victim.

The three American hunters died as they had lived — all three of these battling together. They died, too, as the old mountaineers loved to die. In their day it was counted the highest honor among the men of the mountains for a man to "die with his boots on." It took such a fighting spirit as this for them to hold their own in the Rockies.

When the last Americans to leave Astoria set out up the Columbia, they decided, at the mouth of the Umatilla, to

detach a party under a Mr. Keith to search for the missing party under Reed. With Reed's party was a woman and her children. It was Mrs. Dorion and her little ones, who had come all the way across the continent from St. Louis, with the first Astorian westbound expedition. From interpreter, en route, Pierre Dorion, the father, had turned hunter in Oregon, and his Indian wife had insisted on following him, as usual, into his new field of work.

The expedition to search for them did not get away at the mouth of the Umatilla, as the Indian guides insisted that a better route southward could be found from the Walla Walla. And when the party reached the Walla Walla, they received news that made any further hunting unnecessary.

Two little children sat on the bank of the Columbia as they had done for many days, watching for white men in canoes. These children of Pierre Dorion were sad little creatures. A baby brother of theirs — the first white child born in Oregon — had died while their mother continued on the wilderness trail on horseback a few days after it was born. Now, fatherless, they had battled their way to the Columbia over a bitter winter trail on which they had barely been able to keep alive.

"Arrêtez, donc! Arrêtez, donc!" they called out as the Northwest express passed majestically upstream. The white men in the canoes knew these French words meant "Stop, please!" They paddled quickly for the shore. In the meantime many Indian canoes put off from the river bank, and in one of them went Mrs. Dorion, who with her children alone had survived a terrible wilderness massacre.

Alexander Ross, one of the Astorians in the party bound for Montreal, took down the words of Mrs. Dorion as she told of her heroic fight to save her children, and of

the massacre of all members of the party—to which her husband was attached.



Mrs. Dorion was the Indian wife of Pierre Dorion, the French-Canadian interpreter.

Her story made her as great a heroine in the eyes of those first Oregonians, as was Pocahontas in the eyes of the first Virginians.

“About the middle of August we reached the Great Snake,” explained Mrs. Dorion, “and Reed built a winter house. About the middle of September Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson came to us very poor. Fifteen days before they had been robbed.

“Reed did not like our house, as some Indians shot an arrow into one of our horses; and one of our men, Delaunay,

was killed. We saw some Indians with his scalp, which we recognized from the color of the hair.

"We moved up the river on the other side.

"On the 10th of January, a friendly Indian came running to our house. He said a band of bad Snakes of the Dogrib tribe had burnt our first house and were coming whooping and singing war songs.

"I grabbed up my two children, put them on a horse, and started for where my husband was trapping; but the night was bad, the road dark, and I lost my way.

"The next day being cold and stormy, I did not stir. On the second day, however, I set out again, but seeing a large smoke in the direction I had to go and thinking it might proceed from the Indians, I got into the bushes again and hid myself.

"On the third day, late in the evening, I got in sight of a hut where my husband and other men were trapping. But just as I was approaching the place I saw a man coming from the other side, staggering as if unwell.

"I stopped where I was till he came to me. It was LeClerc, wounded and faint from the loss of blood. He told me that Chapelle, Rezner, and my husband had all been murdered and robbed that morning.

"I did not go into the hut, but putting LeClerc and one of my children on the horse, I turned around immediately, took to the woods and retraced my steps back to Mr. Reed's. LeClerc, however, could not stand the jolting of the horse and he fell off once or twice so that I had to remain for nearly a day in one place.

"That night he died. I covered him over with boughs and snow, put my children on the horse, and led him forward by the halter. The second day I got back to the house. But it was a sad sight, there. For Mr. Reed and the men were all murdered, scalped, and cut to pieces.

"I turned from the sight in agony and despair, took to the woods and passed the cold and lonely night without food or fire.

"I was now at a loss what to do. The snow was deep, the weather cold, and we had nothing to eat. To undertake a long journey under the circumstance meant death.

"Had I been alone I would have run all risks and perished, perhaps; but the thoughts of my children dying of hunger distracted me. Should I venture to the house to seek among the dead for food for my children?

"I knew there was a good stock of food there, but it might have been destroyed or carried off by the murderers.

"Next morning after a sleepless night I wrapped my children in a blanket, tied my horse in a thicket, and then went to a rising ground overlooking the house to see if I could observe anything stirring about the place.

"I saw nothing, and hard as the task was I resolved to venture after dark. I returned to my children and found them nearly frozen. I was afraid to make a fire in the daytime lest the smoke might be seen.

"After dark I set off for the house, where I found plenty of fish scattered about. I gathered, hid, and slung as much upon my back as I could carry and returned again before the dawn of day to my children.

"They were nearly frozen and weak with hunger. I made a fire and warmed them and then we shared some food for the first time in three days.

"Next time I went back again and carried off another load; but when these efforts were over I sank under a sense of my afflictions and I was for three days unable to move and I was without hope.

"On recovering a little I packed up all, loaded my horse and putting my children on top of the load, set out again on foot.



Howard R. Driggs

The Umatilla River in the Blue Mountains, through which the Indian heroine made her way.

“In this sad and hopeless condition I travelled through deep snow among the woods, rocks, and rugged paths for nine days until I and the horse could travel no more.

“Here I selected a lovely spot at the foot of a rocky precipice in the Blue Mountains, intending there to pass the remainder of the winter.

“I killed my horse and hung up the flesh on a tree for my winter food. I built a small hut with pine branches, long grass, and mosses. I packed it all around with snow to keep us warm, and this was a difficult task for I had no ax, but only a knife to cut wood. In this dwelling I passed fifty-three lonely days.

“I then left my hut and set out with my children to

cross the mountains. But I became snow blind the second day and had to remain three days without advancing a step.

"This was unfortunate as our food was about all used up. Having recovered my sight a little, I set out again and got clear of the mountains and down the plains on the fifteenth day after leaving my winter camp.

"But for six days we had scarcely anything to eat. And for the last two days not a mouthful. Soon after we reached the plains I saw a smoke in the distance. But being unable to carry my children any farther, I wrapped them up in my robe, left them concealed, and set out alone in the hope of reaching the Indian camp. I was so weak I could hardly crawl, and I fell asleep on the way. It proved to be Walla Walla and I was kindly treated by them.

"They obtained my children, and we set a watch on the river for canoes of white men."

Thus our Indian heroine told her important story to her white friends. Why this massacre? Clarke, an Astorian trader, had caught an Indian stealing a goblet. He had seized him, had him tried by court-martial, and then hanged him "as a lesson." It proved to be a horrible lesson, indeed, for the Indians avenged themselves on the first whites they met thereafter. That was the Indian way, then as always, so long as the war path was one that they could follow.

Such an act of savage cruelty, it must be said in fairness, did not reflect the true heart of most Indians. They seldom turned savage unless molested while stealing horses or when stirred by the white man's rivalry to treacherous deeds. The real heart of the Indian is reflected more truly by the tender heroism of the Indian mother who made this almost superhuman struggle and saved her little ones.



Chief Pee-eye-em tries on Donald Mackenzie's coat.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PEDLARS FROM THE NORTH

IF Americans paid but slight heed to the pleas of the first of their countrymen who told them of the South Pass through the Rockies and the rich territories that lay beyond, Canadians were almost as slow to heed similar stories that came drifting down to them from the Rockies via the Saskatchewan and St. Lawrence.

For six years after the Astorian messengers had made their flight from out of the "Northern Mystery Land," the unexplored region lay bathed in mountain sunshine, without welcoming any other white man.

Then at last there came over its hilly barriers to the northward, a red-headed Scotch giant. Donald Mackenzie was the name of this giant. He was well over six feet high and he weighed 312 pounds; yet he was outmeasured and outweighed by another giant — an Indian chief named Pee-eye-em.

These two huge men met first within the borders of the mystery realm. When the Indian met the white giant,

he tried on Mackenzie's coat. It lacked fourteen inches, we are told, of going around the red giant's stout frame.

Mackenzie, however, could doubtless have outmatched the Indian giant in a fair fight. Despite his size Mackenzie was not a fat and flabby man. They had not then the railroad trains, automobiles, and other means of easy transportation which keep men soft and lazy.

Once an Indian flew at Mackenzie to murder him while he was asleep. The Scotchman, awaking just in the nick of time, leaped to his feet, and grabbing a tent pole crushed the treacherous assailant to the ground. After that the Indians looked upon attempts to assassinate the athletic old Highlander as "bad medicine." The Indian was not a wild Shoshone of the mountains but an Iroquois, introduced into the Columbia country by the grand nabobs of the Northwest Company. These sat in state and decided, at their headquarters north of Lake Superior,

what the mountain country needed. They concluded that since the Indians along the Snake River did not know how to trap, the trained Iroquois of the East could teach them. Instead of trying to teach them the Iroquois decided to slay their red-headed Scotch leader, and plunder him of his goods. But the Indian selected to do the foul deed was felled so suddenly that a wholesome respect for the big white chief was put into the brains of the Iroquois.

Attired in a leather jacket, Mackenzie strode up and down so constantly, even while in camp, that his



An Indian war club.

companions had a nickname for him. They called him "Perpetual Motion." We noted how Stuart and his Astorian companions, after resting a few days in the pleasant Bear River valley, struck eastward up one of the forks of Bear River. Had they followed another fork they would have discovered the famous Bear Lake, now lying partly in the state of Utah and partly in the state of Idaho.

As they passed this lake by, the honor of discovering it and naming it was left for the famous red-headed Scotch giant, Mackenzie.



A Shoshone war bonnet.

He came thundering down upon it from the north with a motley crew of followers, including a number of Sandwich Islanders, or Owhyees, as he called them.

In all the wild multitude who made the Far West known to us, he was perhaps the most striking and romantic figure. The Indians revered him for his great strength and courage. One shot at him when his back was turned. He merely turned around, lifted the redskin off his feet, and slapped the fellow's face. This was worse than killing him, for it made the Indians laugh till they jeered him out of their camp.

Being a Highland clansman himself, he knew the Indians through and through. He trusted their great chiefs so

implicitly that he even left many bales of goods in the keeping of one friendly chief. Six months later the goods were returned, without the loss of a single article.

Three of his Owhyees were killed and scalped on one river he visited. He named it in their honor the Owhyee River. This river can still be found on the map of Idaho. Few, however, know that the name came from these unfortunate Hawaiians who were slain on its banks.

On another river he and his men became ill from eating beaver of a peculiar white-colored flesh. He named this stream the Malade River. It still bears that name, though few people know how the name originated. Later Mackenzie found what had caused the illness of his men. He offered some of the flesh of the beavers to an Indian; the Indian refused to eat, but told the Scotch leader always to roast it, never to boil it. It was poison, he said, if boiled, but all right if roasted.

Mackenzie also named the Brule, the Weiser, the Portneuf, and the Payette rivers. All these are important streams in the Snake River country.

It was Mackenzie's purpose to penetrate and explore the land of the "Northern Mystery." As a base of supplies, he built a fort near the point where the Snake River enters the Columbia. This was called Fort Nez Percé, in honor of one of the tribes of Indians living around it. It is now called Walla Walla, or rather the city is so-called that has grown up near it. Assisting Mackenzie in this enterprise was another Scotch trail blazer, Alexander Ross.

Mackenzie was of the same family as that famous Alexander Mackenzie, who was the first white man to cross the Rocky Mountains and who, on July 14, 1789, reached the Arctic Ocean after trailing down the great river now bearing his name to tidewater.

Alexander, like Donald, was one of the heroic adven-

turers of the "Nor'west" Company of Montreal, and was always proud to be called a "Nor'wester."

In pushing down the Mackenzie River to the Arctic, Alexander Mackenzie settled for all time the question that had lured Hudson into Hudson's Bay, and even into the Hudson River, — the question of a Northwest Passage to the Orient.

Donald, coming after him, in pushing northwest exploration to Bear Lake, planted the flag of this company on the last spot it ever explored, and thus wrote "Finis" to its bold and splendid story. Like Escalante, who came into the land of the Northern Mystery from the south, Donald Mackenzie was the last of his kind. When he retreated from Bear Lake it was to receive the news that the great Northwest Company was no more. It had been swallowed up in the Hudson's Bay Company, and henceforth they were to operate as one, with the settled trade purpose, in this Rocky Mountain country, of keeping the Americans out.

This final journey that led Donald Mackenzie into the grassy wintering grounds of Bear River was undertaken as a result of stories carried to Montreal by the returning Astorians, just such stories as those David Stuart was telling in New York, and Ramsay Crooks in Washington between 1813 and 1817.

Mackenzie, indeed, was among those men of Astor's company who went west across the Rockies in 1811. He had before that been ten years among the Indians as a Nor'wester; and it was said he quarreled with Wilson Price Hunt on the Astorian journey westward, because Hunt insisted on doing things that as an experienced Indian trader he could not approve.

He broke away from Hunt just after they had reached the Snake River, west of the Three Tetons, and proved

his skill in trail blazing by arriving at the Columbia River a whole month before the next best travelers in Hunt's party.

When Mrs. Dorion and her children told their tragic story to the white men whose canoes they halted on the Columbia, Mackenzie was in the group. He had in his belt a draft for \$80,000 to pay Astor for the furs and goods taken over at Astoria. War had broken out between England and America, and the Americans were quitting the Columbia.

Mackenzie delivered his report and money to Astor. He returned to Montreal and continued to work for the Nor'westers who took over Astor's post. All the while he continued to insist to the Governors at Fort William that below the Tetons were many rich beaver streams.

They finally believed him enough to send him back up the Saskatchewan to open this territory. They gave him an independent command, and ordered Alexander Ross to help him build a depot from which to outfit his brigades. Walla Walla was the place they chose. And there these two old Astorian friends were reunited, while the governors at Fort George, which was rechristened Astoria, fumed and fretted against them both.

They sneered at Mackenzie's rifle practice. They made fun of the fact that he could eat horseflesh when required. They said that eating horse meat and shooting at a mark was all this giant was good for. But finally they bit their lips, and in silent indignation, sent on to Fort Nez Percé, as the Walla Walla structure was called, men and means for an expedition southward.

Mackenzie traded beads and buttons for horses. He met hostile chiefs in their own wigwams, petted the children, and went about utterly unafraid, until he won them to his side. He at last mustered 55 men, 195 horses,

and 300 beaver traps. It was a formidable cavalcade of trappers and traders, armed and organized for the first invasion in force of the Great Basin's hidden valleys.

Off they went, up the Snake and across to the Bear River valley. They started in September, near the end of the month; for Mackenzie feared neither blizzards nor Blackfeet. He marched his men, except the Iroquois, whom he was forced to leave at the Boise River, because they were rebellious, into the rich beaver country Stuart had seen while eastbound.

Mackenzie made an exploring trip to the headwaters of the Snake. He wrote his friend Ross that he "regretted, every step he made, that they had been so long deprived of the riches of such a country."

He made a pair of snowshoes, and on them traveled in midwinter back to Fort Nez Percé, a distance of 600 miles. He took only six companions with him on this perilous trip, and they arrived "in fine health with their blanket rolls upon their back."

After only a week at the fort, Mackenzie was off again for Bear River, this time in a boat, for he was determined to prove the Snake could be navigated. He reached the mouth of Burnt River, through what we now know as Box Canyon, and sent the boat back with a letter telling of his success. It was dated "Point Successful, Head of the Narrows, April 15, 1819."

Of such heroic stuff were our first Far Western pathfinders made!



Mackenzie at the great Indian rendezvous on Bear River in 1819.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MACKENZIE'S DAY OF TRIUMPH

MACKENZIE's great adventure in the Mystery Land sent a thrill of joy through the Columbia River section. The Bear Lake region and the Uinta Mountains lying south-east, and the Rockies northeast of it, had begun to pour out their wealth in Midas-like portions. Our Scotch giant, who knew how to get on with winter snows and Indian chiefs alike, sent back furs enough to the Columbia to start the rafters of Astor's old fort echoing with cheers.

From now on the land of the Northern Mystery was to be no longer neglected and unknown. White men must have it! But of white men, what kind?

Stirred by the tales of Stuart and our friend Andrew Henry, who had been first to reach the headwaters of the Snake, American traders from St. Louis struck out again up the Missouri for the hidden wealth of the Far West.

Astor was not sitting complacently in New York, acknowledging that he had been driven off the Columbia, and out of all land beyond the Rockies! Instead he was bearding Northwest nabobs in Montreal and expressing his anger over their work in jockeying the Americans out of Astoria. He was pressing upon President Madison the necessity to watch the treaty makers, after the War of 1812, and make sure they remembered that the Columbia was American and must be restored to its pre-war status.

Astor was not satisfied even with appeals to the President. He considered the American politicians knew much less than he about the wealth that lay over the mountain barriers at the head of the Platte. He even sent agents abroad to prod the treaty makers while they were at work.

The result was the laying of a foundation for the eventual declaration of American rights beyond the Rockies.

But the immediate effect of Astor's activities was to spur the Nor'westers into a determination to drain the Rockies of their beaver wealth before the Americans could make their next thrust across these mountains.

A strong policy of backing Mackenzie up with all necessary men and means was the first expression of this new purpose. The Nor'westers sent in a trader named Kittson with goods to trade, and horses to bring out the beaver. Fort Nez Percé they strengthened until Ross, its commander, declared it to be "the Gibraltar of the Columbia" — the finest of five forts from which the Northwest Company ruled its transmontane empire.

"Pedlars," these fur traders from Montreal called themselves. This came from their habit of bargaining for furs from the Indians at appointed places, instead of having the Indians travel to their forts, as the Hudson's Bay Company did.

In the fall of 1819, the "pedlars from the north" crowded men into the Great Basin, up the route of the Snake and the Portneuf to Bear River. All that winter they trapped the waters between the Bear and the Green rivers, and in the spring they had enough beaver packs to load down 152 horses. This was wealth — wealth enough to start every nabob of the Northwest service to rejoicing, and to fighting to hold this rich land.

While he was collecting this rich burden of fur, Mackenzie scribbled a note to his friend Ross at Fort Nez Percé. He dated it at "Black Bears Lake, Sept. 10, 1819." This is the first record of the naming of this lake in the northeastern corner of the Mystery Land; it was afterward shortened to Bear Lake, the name it still makes famous.

Neither Mackenzie nor his friend Ross has told us exactly where it occurred, but Mackenzie mustered one of the largest gatherings of Indians ever known to have assembled west of the Rockies at one time. It was estimated there were over 10,000 Indians in this rendezvous. Their camp filled a stretch of land seven miles long, Indian tepees crowding both banks of Bear River.

Not all the tribes that came were friendly. At one end of the gigantic camp, the Bannocks, called by Mackenzie the "Ban-at-tees," took their station. At the other end the War-are-ree-kas assembled. Then in the center came the Shoshones, or "Shirry-dikas," as Mackenzie called them.

He was surprised to see a mile of land on each side of their camp unoccupied. But he gained a new sense of the order amid the apparent confusion of Indian life when in moved two more big bands, just large enough to fill up the spaces left for them.

Of this great camp, the Indian giant Pee-eye-em and another Indian almost as large, Ama-qui-em, his brother,



Mountain buffalo.

Canadian Pacific

were the supreme commanders. All others bowed to their authority.

Mackenzie, the 312-pound white giant, strode about with Indian chiefs. He was accorded instant recognition and respect. The Indians thought only the greatest of chiefs could grow so large and be so strong.

To Mackenzie's surprise, they had refused the tobacco offered them. They had some of their own, growing wild in that country, which they claimed was the original tobacco. They told how ages ago they taught the other Indians to smoke and how other Indians carried away tobacco plants to introduce them elsewhere. They smoked and smoked until they seemed half drunken with the tobacco fumes.

Mackenzie and the great chiefs harangued the Indians in favor of peace with the whites. After the powwow he rode with the chiefs around the camp. It took a whole day to make the circuit.

The Indians then decamped mysteriously for retreats

in the desert and in the mountains, out of which they had come. In a few hours after the great encampment broke up, the plains were as free of Indians as if none had ever appeared.

At Fort Nez Percé, Ross spent many anxious days watching for his friend's return with the Bear River furs.

"And then one day," he wrote, "a cloud of dust arose in the direction in which they were expected, and by the aid of a spyglass, we perceived from 400 to 500 horses, escorted by as many riders, advancing at a slow pace, in a line more than two miles" in length. They resembled rather a caravan of pilgrims than a trapping party.

It was our friends, accompanied by a band of Cayuse Indians who had joined them as they emerged from the defiles of the Blue Mountains. Soon after, Mackenzie in his leather jacket, accompanied by two of their chiefs, arrived at the fort.

This was on the 22d of June, 1820. It had taken nearly a month for Mackenzie to make the journey from the waters running inland.

Once again this last of the pedlars was to go into the Mystery Land in quest of its wealth. The joy of being the first white trader in these regions was his. The Indians brought rich stores of beaver, sewed into cloaks. They asked contemptuously if the poor white nation had nothing better than such skins wherewith to clothe themselves. These furs they eagerly swapped for brass rings and beads, asking hardly a tenth part of what the Indians who were nearer to the coast demanded. The canny Scotch trader had reason to chuckle to himself at his good luck.

But it was short-lived. When Mackenzie came gayly riding down upon Fort Nez Percé on July 10, 1821, proud of the fact that he had gathered even more furs than during

the year before, and proud also of the fact that in doing it he had not lost a single man, Ross told him there was bad news from home.

This was, as we have learned, that the Northwest Company had been absorbed by its powerful rival, the Hudson's Bay Company, the papers having been signed on the twenty-first of March, 1821. The great Northwest Company would never send another explorer into the wilderness.

Mackenzie had participated in many a feud with the men of the Hudson's Bay Company. He had no heart to serve them, so left the mountains for good.

"His travelling notes," his friend Ross wrote of him, "were often kept on a beaver skin, written hieroglyphically with a pencil or a piece of coal."

This, then, was the man who made England's first bid for possession of the Northern Mystery Land. We like to think that the region came to us from Mexico. But Spaniards and Mexicans never tried seriously to settle or possess it. Canadians most earnestly did.





Canadian National Railways

The Ramparts, a typical mountain range in the Canadian Rockies.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE EAGLE BEARDS THE LION IN THE WEST

THE average Far Western boy of today finds it hard to think of his native valley in Utah, Idaho, or Nevada as having been once governed from a fort on Hudson's Bay. Yet this is the fact. When Donald Mackenzie retreated from Bear River valley in 1820 he went out of the West by way of the Saskatchewan River and then journeyed on from Montreal to Fort Albany on Hudson's Bay. His object was to inquire of the Governor of Rupert's Land, what position he could hope for in the new company's service.

All the land trapped in by the Hudson's Bay Company was named Rupert's Land in honor of Prince Rupert, founder of that great company. The charter for this company had been granted by King Charles the Second in

1662. Its boundaries were as elastic as the company's trappers could stretch and hold them.

Donald Mackenzie, rightly honored for the wealth he had brought out of the land of the Northern Mystery, was made governor of the company's colony on the Red River, known as the Selkirk colony. This was a kind of haven of refuge for retiring hunters of the company who could not take their Indian families back to Scotland or England with them. The modern city of Winnipeg grew out of it.

In retiring Mackenzie, the Governor, at his Hudson's Bay retreat, was quick to send another hunter into the Bear River country to take the Scotch giant's place. The man chosen was one of Astor's old fur hunters who, like Mackenzie, had hung on in the Far West in the service of the Northwest Company.

He was a slender, youthful man, as different from Mackenzie as one Scotchman could be from another. But he was no less a man of iron. He feared no living creature, and yet he had all the kindliness of a Highland clansman in making peace, and getting away without bloodshed whenever he could do so with honor. Alexander Ross had maintained Fort Nez Percé, situated at the junction of the Snake and the Columbia, to send supplies through to Mackenzie's Bear River camp, so he knew the way of those mountains.

At another fort, Okanogan, on the northern branch of the Columbia, Ross had faced wild grizzly bears and wilder wolves of gigantic size. Each of these great wolves, he tells us, led a troop of smaller wolves behind him. He had seen these giant wolves stalk and kill his horses while the smaller wolves of the troop sped up to share in the feast the leader spread for them. After living through that experience, the West had no terrors left for him.

Ross, like Mackenzie, wished to quit the Columbia. He was even doing so in 1823 when he was overtaken by



Indians at a British trading post.

orders issued for the occupation of the Snake River country by Sir George Simpson of Rupert's Land. The orders were dated, "York Factory, Hudson's Bay, July 13, 1823." They tendered to Ross, as Mackenzie's friend and the man best fitted to handle that country, the overlordship of these mountain streams for a period of three years.

With Ross when he received the orders was his good friend Peter Skene Ogden, who was destined to play a very large rôle in the final opening of the West. Ogden pleaded with him to accept. Ross yielded and came plunging southward over Mackenzie's old trail.

With forty men, he first struck for the Rockies up Flathead River to Flathead Post, one of the old Northwest stations in the mountains. Winter could not overcome him. He decided to plow his way through to the buffalo ranges to lay in meat for his spring hunt. He did this, in

spite of blizzards which would have broken the spirit of any but a thoroughly hardened mountaineer.

In the record of this journey Ross wrote of one incident which was fraught with greater consequence for himself, for England, and for America than he at the time could imagine.

In the fastnesses of the mountains, northward from the Three Tetons, Ross met Americans. Before these Americans had come into the camp of this British monarch of the mountainous country, they had played havoc with the loyalty of Ross's Iroquois hunters.

For many years the capitals at London and Washington gossiped about this meeting and the alleged "sharp" practices of the "Yankees" on their British cousins. The Britons were puzzled and angered over the matter. Had they known better the free, personal, responsible spirit of the new America they might better have understood it all, but their anger over the upset would not have been lessened.

British trappers worked under the old feudalistic régime. In trapping, they went out with horses, guns, and traps furnished by the company. They were held to the company by a tie of indebtedness, the company expecting them to turn over all the beaver they could catch. Prices were so adjusted under this feudal system that the company headquarters practically always had a bill for debt against the "servant of the company" who took its traps and guns into the wilderness.

The American, depending on himself, recognized no such feudalistic ties. He regarded the trappers he met in the mountains as responsible individuals. If they wanted to sell beaver, and would take his price, why that was the regular Yankee way.

The free American trading with the indebted servants

of the British company raised a storm that swept two continents. It all came about because the adherents of a system of feudalism could not understand the ways of simple, direct trading in a democracy, organized to emphasize the importance and power of the individual.

Advocates of both systems were now in the mountains. Which side would win?

Ross's own story of the beginnings of the clash between the Hudson's Bay men and the free American trappers will help to illuminate the situation and reveal a little of the feeling that existed.

"The season had now arrived," he wrote, "When I was to send (men) to meet the Iroquois who left on the sixteenth of June. On leaving Canoe Point I despatched three men to the Trois Tetons south of Godin's River—the appointed rendezvous."

The three men had to travel through dangerous Blackfoot country. They were surprised, and had to fight for their lives. Ross, on hearing their report after escaping from the Blackfeet, sent out a stronger party.

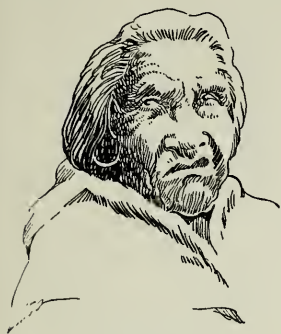
"This party," Ross continues, "got safely back on the 14th of October, after an absence of 10 days, bringing along with them not only the ten Iroquois, but seven American trappers as well.

"But the Iroquois arrived trapless and beaverless; naked and destitute of almost everything; and in debt to the American trappers for having conveyed them to the Trois Tetons!

"And this was their story: 'We proceeded,' said Old Pierre (the same from whom Pierre's Hole took its name), 'in a southerly direction, crossed over the main river, and struck into the interior to be out of the way of Indians. There we trapped with good success for nearly two months.

" 'At last some of the Snakes found us out and Cana-

tayehare married one of their women, for whom he gave a horse.



Old Pierre

““The Indians wished for another horse, but were refused; the wife deserted, and we changed to another place to avoid the Indians.

““There a war party fell upon us and robbed us of everything. We had 900 beaver, 54 steel traps and 27 horses. All of these together with five of our guns and nearly all our clothing, the Snakes carried off.

““Naked and destitute as we then were, we set out on our way back. And on the third day after starting we fell in with the Americans. We promised them \$40 to escort us back to Godin’s River. There we arrived the day before the men you sent to meet us. The Americans came along with us here.

““They had a good many beaver but put them all in a cache till they turned back.’

“Such was the tale Old Pierre told me.

“When it was over I questioned the Americans, who appeared to be shrewd men. They confirmed part of the Iroquois story.

“Smith, a very intelligent person, who seemed to be a leading man among them, acknowledged to me that he had received 105 beaver for escorting back the Iroquois, although Old Pierre had not touched on this circumstance.

“No two of them, however, told the story in the same way; so it appeared to me to be a piece of trickery from beginning to end. . . .

"Some time after they arrived another story got into circulation — perhaps the true one. This was that while on their hunting ground they fell in with the seven Americans noticed, who succeeded in seducing them to their side under pretext of giving them \$5 for every beaver skin at the Yellowstone river, where the Americans had a trading post.

"With that in view, expecting to profit by this contemplated speculation, they had left their furs *en cache* with those of the American party, where they had been hunting.

"They had come back not with the intention of remaining with us, but rather as the story ran, to get what they could from us and then to seduce their comrades to desert in a body with their furs to the Americans, as a party of them had already done in 1822. This story I had no difficulty in believing.

"I knew there must be some knavery going on between the Americans and the Iroquois from the constant intercourse that existed between them."

Ross rushed for home, keeping doubled guards to scare both the Americans and Indians into remaining close to his camp. The Americans tarried, and went north with Ross.

Why? It is easy to find the answer. They believed this country was theirs. They wanted to look it over. They wanted to see what the British were doing there, since these Hudson's Bay men appeared to them only as interlopers.

These Americans now had planted their outposts in the heart of the land of the Northern Mystery. They had no intention of yielding up to others all the riches of this land. What right had Great Britain to this field more than had Americans?



Ross, the Briton, and Smith, the American, fighting side by side.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

“FRIENDLY ENEMIES” IN THE ROCKIES

JOHN BULL and Uncle Samuel have had many a little family tiff among themselves, but they have always shown themselves members of the same Anglo-Saxon family, when the call came to fight a common foe.

It was not the destiny of America and Canada that their sons should fight each other. Just as they marched away together to fight in the World War in 1917, so these first Anglo-Saxon brothers, who met in the disputed ground in the Rockies — a Scottish Highlander and a New England Puritan — soon found they must show the family spirit of brotherhood, in spite of themselves.

Alexander Ross feared that Jedediah Strong Smith, “the leading man” among the seven Americans who came to his camp in Idaho, would beat him in a bargain for furs. He did not want to have him in that country.

Yet within a very few days Ross and Smith were fighting side by side against a common foe. And they were entering into a personal fellowship that should make them boon companions through the coming winter. They made up to each other just as Johnny Bull and Uncle Samuel



Salmon River, along which Smith and his men trailed back toward Pierre's Hole.

did when they negotiated their way out of all their troubles in Oregon instead of going to war about them.

It all happened when some Nez Percé Indians came into Ross's camp, which was at the junction of the Salmon and Pahsimeri rivers in Custer County, Idaho. These Indians were "poor weather-beaten wanderers" who had been despoiled by the Blackfeet. They were originally part of a band of seventeen hunters, who had been outfitted by Ross. They reported that the Blackfeet had killed six of their number and the rest had fled, making their way as best they could by night travel to Ross's camp.

They also reported that the Blackfeet were infesting the whole country round about. Ross looked upon his American escort in a new light now.

A defile lay ahead in which Ross's men might be ambushed. He chose two of the Americans for the advance party to find out what was lurking in the bad country

ahead. As they rode through, Ross leading the combined force, they saw on a plain beyond what seemed to be deer. They gave chase and found the deer to be Indians.

To let Ross go on with the story: "The Indians, on discovering us, began to quicken their pace and make for a hiding place. We at the same time advanced at full speed. The match was warmly contested but the Indians won by a short distance. They got to the bush before we could reach them. In their hurry however they had thrown away everything that encumbered them, robes, shoes, and some of them even their bows and arrows.

"Immediately on getting to the bush we dismounted and invited them to come out and smoke with us, assuring them that we were their friends. But they answered: 'Come in here and smoke with us. We are your friends.'

"We then sat down on a little rising ground to rest our horses, for we had given them a good heating. We kept in the meantime talking with the Indians. They gave us to understand that they were Crows — the name of a tribe in the Missouri.

"But although they spoke to us in that language, the impression on our minds was that they were Blackfeet, and we told them so. This they denied, on account, no doubt, of having killed the Nez Percés, some of whom they saw with us.

"Some of our people gathered together the things the Indians had thrown away, namely, sixteen buffalo robes, six dressed skins, fifty-two pairs of moccasins, and two quivers full of bows and arrows. All of these things we laid in a pile, telling the Indians we did not wish to injure them or take anything away belonging to them.

"Then taking a piece of tobacco we stuck it in a forked stick at the edge of the bush for them to smoke after our departure.

"We then prepared to return; but had some difficulty in preventing the Nez Percés from taking the spoil and from firing on the Indians in the bush. However, I told them that since they were with the whites and put themselves under our protection, they must do as we did.

"As we were in the act of mounting our horses to return, we saw at a distance a crowd of men and horses, following the track by which the Indians had come and making straight for us.

"From their appearance at a distance they seemed very numerous, and taking them for another war party we considered ourselves between two fires. Not wishing, however, to run off, we examined a small point of woods near the Indians where we could retreat in case of being too hard pressed. We then secured our horses under a guard of ten men, while the other twenty-six with their guns ready awaited the arrival of the suspicious party."

The little international army hadn't long to wait. Up came the Indians. Imagine the surprise of the whites, on finding that the Indians were mounted on horses belonging to the British and American party — the horses they had left back in their main camp, with their trappers and the women and children who accompanied them!

There were only four Indians in this party — driving off over forty of the white men's horses. Highlanders and Yankees alike, with all their motley followers, charged the enemy. They captured three of the four horse thieves with all their own and the thieves' horses.

Now their mood changed toward the Indians in the bush. They recognized them as part of the horse-thieving band. Going back, they tried to speak to them — but the Indians would not answer, although the whites could hear them speaking to one another.

There was no question of respecting the property of the

Indians. They picked up their pile of skins and arrows, and made their way back to headquarters with the band of horses.

On such narrow chances, the question of life and death, of proceeding in comfort or of being beggared in the wilderness, depended in those precarious days.

"As we journeyed along," wrote Ross, "the Nez Percés showed us the spot where their six companions had fallen a sacrifice to the fury of their enemies. On arriving at the fatal spot the poor fellows wrought themselves up into a frantic state of mourning. They tore their hair, cut their flesh and howled like wild beasts. Then gathering up the remains of their dead, they buried them at a distance."

Ross and his motley following, including the American contingent, of whom he had written as probable spies, reached Flathead House at the end of November. This trading post was located near Thompson Falls, Sanders County, Montana.

There Ross bade farewell to the Snake River country, in these words:

"I may say that all things considered our returns were the most profitable ever brought out of the Snake country in one year. They amounted to 5000 beaver, exclusive of other peltries. I had the satisfaction of receiving from Governor Simpson a letter of thanks for the success of the expedition. This brings our Snake adventures to a close."

Ross followed Mackenzie over the mountains to the Red River settlement. There he became historian for the colony, while his Indian wife became one of its grand ladies.

Ross left — but Jedediah Strong Smith had gained, while in his company, most valuable information for his countrymen.

Full of consequences, too, in the ensuing story of the Far West, was the meeting at Flathead House between

Peter Skene Ogden and Jedediah Smith. They were soon to meet again — down in Utah, where both were to struggle for the right of possession of the Inland Empire — one with the weapons of democracy and fair bargaining; the other with the weapons of feudalism with its inevitable mortgage on the work of each of its so-called retainers.

As to Jedediah Smith, called by Ross an American spy, the story he carried out was most fascinating both to the British lords of the Hudson's Bay Company, who counted on fat dividends from the Rockies, and to the Americans at St. Louis, who were determined this country should be theirs.

Smith's message, sent out of the mountains a little later by his friend and leader, William H. Ashley, in a letter to United States Senator Thomas H. Benton, was that "Ogden boasted" that the British had taken out of the Snake country, in the years since Americans had been driven away from that country in the War of 1812, a total of 85,000 beaver, worth the sum of \$750,000.

We must not overlook the importance of this message. Gentlemen in London still favored high hats, made of beaver. On just this item of fashion depended the drive that gave to America our Far West.

For while gentlemen would call for beaver hats, American hunters would go out in quest of beaver streams. Tragic was the news of a later day at the Uinta rendezvous when the word went around that gentlemen in London had changed from beaver hats to silk hats. It meant that the careers of mountaineers must end.

Smith's message went on its way to stir up the business leaders of two nations.

In the meantime he himself worked southward and when next we hear of him he was on the shores of Great Salt Lake, trying to find his companions, hidden away in Cache

Valley, and living fat upon the abundant game of this rich mountain recess.

But how had it happened that Jedediah Strong Smith had come into these mountains with his band of American explorers? That is the story to be found in the succeeding chapters.



The deer were Indians in disguise.



Scene near the source of Green River, a stream which played a prominent part during the period of exploration.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WRITTEN ON A PRECIPICE

THE written history of the country westward of the Rockies where Americans made their first stand for possession begins with a single name, and a date, painted high on a mountain precipice.

The name is "ASHLEY" and the date is "1825."

The precipice on which William Henry Ashley, an American of Missouri, wrote his name overhung a river, flowing through eastern Utah in that particular section, though rising far northward in Wyoming and winding its way southwestward into the Gulf of California. It was along this cliff-barricaded Green River that Ashley set high his mark in this early year.

The coming of Ashley to this river meant that Americans had again crossed the continental divide through the South Pass on the main road to the Far West. This party had come from east to west. With him were many men—

Americans all except for a few voyageurs. They had come as the first rippling of the immigrant tide that was soon to follow in their wake and carry all obstacles before it.

In 1869 a famous explorer came down this same river. It was Major J. W. Powell, a one-armed hero of the Civil War. The book he wrote about his adventures contains many a thrilling story for Americans. Yet the story of a hidden hero that was connected with this inscription on the precipice seemed to have been lost to him. When Powell came to the overhanging cliff on which was painted "ASHLEY 1825" he could make nothing out of it.

One can hardly think of Ashley as a hidden hero. He had gained great fame in his day. He had explored the

Monday ^{5th} Pulled out again this morning and kept a look-out for Ashley Falls. Passed through a few rapids and camped for dinner near two little creeks. Ran down to within a couple of rods of the Falls and when the other boats came up we unloaded and proceeded to make the portage. We carried the provisions, in ground and over the huge fallen rocks to quiet water below the falls. Then we carried the Dean over and let her drive below. The catonilla we let down by lines but she coked and filled her standing room besides two or three trunks on hidden rocks so we ported the Powell too and after supper we camped just above the fall. The Falls were named "Ashley" by the Major two years ago in consequence of an old hunter, who wrote his name ASHLEY (facsimile) in a conspicuous place on a rock by the falls. ¹⁸⁸⁵ The Major says that we will now have smooth water until we reach the canon of Lo Dore, and the boys who have had their provisions gut, have packed them away. We were all very tired when we got through the portage. Fall 8 1/2 feet

Photograph showing the facsimile of the Ashley inscription and accompanying notes, from the notebook kept by Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, who was with Major Powell on his second trip down the Green River. Reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. Dellenbaugh.

Green River valley through the Uintas, had served in Congress, had pleaded for cavalry for the Far West, had

furnished information on which the first correct maps of the Far West were drawn. Ashley's speeches took up much space in the Congressional Record. His park in St. Louis, where he gathered wild animals and curios from the mountains, was famous for miles around. And yet Powell, who served under the same department of the government that had many of Ashley's reports on file, reported of him that he was a poor voyager who in 1855 suffered shipwreck at this place where he wrote his name, and with a single survivor of the wreck besides himself started overland, on a berry diet, to hunt up the Mormon settlers of Salt Lake. Powell misread the date by 30 years.

The name which Ashley painted on the mountain wall will one day be restored and will become a shrine for the men who love the Great Outdoors, and who love to honor those that really did the work of winning the Farther West.

Not only as the statesman who next after Robert Stuart and Ramsay Crooks proclaimed the West to an indifferent East, will Ashley be remembered. In addition he will be known as a bold leader who knew how to select real men and to trust them with important work. One of Ashley's men, whom he aided as a boy, became the first discoverer of the Great Basin's four surrounding walls. This man whom Ashley discovered and trusted was the one who solved at last the greatest of the secrets of the Mystery Land. The man was Jedediah Strong Smith, a hidden hero whose thrilling story will soon be told.

Pioneers making their weary way westward over the dry stretches through the South Pass blessed the Big Sandy Creek near the top of the continent when they came upon it. Ashley named this westward-flowing stream. Down into the Green River from the west flow many streams from which Americans took a fortune in furs. Many of these carry the names of Ashley's men; as,



Union Pacific System

Granddaddy Lakes in the Uinta Mountains, first explored by Ashley and his men.

Smith's Fork, Henry's Fork, Black's Fork, and Bridger Creek. One of them also is called Ashley Creek. It is named from its discoverer.

Hunters for generations have reveled in the hunter's paradise beneath the majestic Teton peaks. It is named Jackson's Hole. Jackson was one of Ashley's band.

Across the Tetons westward from Jackson's Hole settlers found waiting for them a verdant valley. Ashley's trappers had called it "Pierre's Hole" in honor of the Iroquois Indian named "Grand Pierre," whom they found there, trapping for the Hudson's Bay Company. Anxious and willing to come over to the Americans for better pay and fairer treatment, Pierre joined Ashley.

We may all wonder why John Jacob Astor, the American immigrant boy from Waldorf, Germany, who had by now grown rich as a fur merchant, failed to return to the West.

There is a very simple answer. A fur-trading post on the Missouri River, or rather on the Mississippi below its junction with the Missouri, was growing into a rather proud river metropolis. This city was St. Louis, which had been under the French and Spanish flags before it flew the Stars and Stripes from the public square.

Men of St. Louis, who saw the opportunities of the Rocky Mountain country, felt that it was naturally their territory. They did not want any New Yorkers getting into the business with them; so they rejected the offers of Astor to join with them in winning for Americans the rich fur regions of the Farther West.

Astor, begging constantly for an armed post road to Oregon, and for the occupation of Oregon by our troops, had to sit by at his Mackinac headquarters, while the Government remained indifferent. The Missourians meanwhile took things into their own hands and thrust out again into the Rockies by way of discovered trails.

From the time Astor's men came through to St. Louis by way of a "gap in the mountains at the end of the Wind River range," the American story of occupation west of the Rockies is one of simple progression out of St. Louis. The starting point of this new movement was this advertisement which appeared in the Missouri Republican of St. Louis, March 20, 1822:

To Enterprizing Young Men:

The subscriber wishes to engage 100 young men to ascend the Missouri River to its source, there to be employed for one, two, or three years. For particulars inquire of Major Andrew Henry near the lead mines in the county of Washington, who will ascend with and command the party; or of the subscriber near St. Louis.

(Signed) WILLIAM H. ASHLEY

A simple beginning, surely, for the great American epic to be enacted in the opening of the Far West! Yet you have only to glance at the roster of the young men who responded to that advertisement, and you find their names corresponding to the greatest mountains, rivers, canyons, and trails of the Inland Empire stretching from the Rockies to the Sierras.

There was William L. Sublette, who gave his name to the Sublette Cut-off on the Oregon Trail; Andrew Henry, who returned to the mountains to give his name to an important fork of the Green River, in addition to having already given it to a branch of the Snake; Jim Bridger, who went to the mountains as a boy, and remained to be the last of the famous mountaineers; Thomas Fitzpatrick, who brought up Kit Carson as a dead shot and taught him the way to fight and whip the Indians; and old Hugh Glass, who was destined to fall into the clutches of a grizzly bear, and wounded nigh unto death, was to crawl about 100 miles back to Fort Kiowa after being abandoned by his companions.

These bold men did more than open the Far West to America; they held the West for years for our country. Picture them as encamped, from 1824 on, in the secret valleys of the Uintas, at the apex of a triangle with one point resting on Fort Vancouver, the Hudson's Bay Company's stronghold on the Columbia, and the other point resting on San Diego, fortified outpost of Spanish and Mexican civilization!

The Americans had no welcome in the Land of Mystery. The Mexicans showed clearly how they felt about it. The British did not want them when they journeyed to the Northwest, and the British had been trained for many generations in all the arts and blandishments of keeping out of their fur-hunting empire those they did not want.

Did the Americans turn back? It is sufficient to say that most of them were men like Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson, thrilled with the same purpose that sent Daniel Boone on and on into the farther eastward wilderness.

In remembrance of these wrongs, Ashley after quitting the mountains fought in Congress for the sending of dragoons into the mountains. These mounted troops were organized at last and rode up over the South Pass in 1845, creating havoc among the British, who had hoped to hold Oregon for their own.

The name *Ashley*, linked with that long ago 1825, makes a title for one of the most stirring of stories in the battle for the West.





"They came upon two sleepy mounted watchers of the Rees."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BREAKING THE RED BLOCKADE

LIKE a bugle call to the heart of a seasoned soldier came the proposition of a new venture in the Rockies to Andrew Henry. Dropping his work in the mines of Missouri, where for ten years he had been delving and waiting for his day to win success in the fur game and to even up with the Blackfeet, he joined eagerly with General Ashley in recruiting the band of young Americans for service in the Rockies.

Naturally Henry was given the leadership of this first band of Ashley's men. The old major knew the trails and the game. His mettle also had been proved in the fiery furnace of Indian wars.

The red-blooded young men that were chosen out of those that leaped in response to Ashley's advertisement were all of Henry's kind. Many of the band — as the days to come were to show — were fit for the leadership themselves. They were all Americans to the core.

Astor had failed in his Western venture largely because he had not behind him men of this spirit. The Astorians were courageous enough; that has been amply demonstrated in preceding chapters. But they lacked mountaineering experience and, being largely Canadians, they were quick to fraternize with and sell out the interests of their

employer and their own service—as we have seen—to his rivals.

Ashley chose Kentuckians who bore enmity against the Northern fur traders from Revolutionary days. They were men of iron also who had been bred to hardship on the upper waters of the Missouri. In the adventures of these men, we hear of no more fraternizing with such disastrous consequences as the loss of Astoria. When they come later into a clash with their rivals, it is the British, not the Americans, that withdraw from the Northwest.

Leading the first hundred of Ashley's mountaineer army, Henry forced his way in 1822 up the Missouri to the mouth of the Yellowstone. Here he planted his post and spent the winter. The Blackfeet, meanwhile, were not idle; they disputed fiercely the right of the Americans in their domain; but Henry was there this time to stay as long as he desired to do so.

While snowbound in the long winter of 1822-3, the veteran cut a dashing figure among his companions. The old major was a tall, slender man, of commanding presence. He was good company, too, for he was fond of the violin and carried this favorite instrument of his to the mountains just as the Scotch brigade leaders had carried their bagpipes.

While Henry was gayly weathering out the winter and when springtime came battling the Blackfeet again, with men under him who were destined a little later to conquer this haughty tribe, Ashley was busy recruiting another hundred young Americans for the mountains. This second detachment raised, the general himself struck out in 1823 with his band up the Missouri in the wake of Henry. But the way was blocked this time by the treacherous Aricara Indians. Perhaps they felt in Ashley's arrival the impending end of their rule.

Ashley had expected friendly treatment from the tribe. Lewis and Clark when westbound in 1804, and again when



Aricara Indians in camp.

they were returning from the Pacific coast in 1806, had found these Indians friendly. And they had also been friendly to Astor's men who went west in 1811, through their country.

But these fickle red men loved the sport of horse stealing too well always to resist the temptation. They traded horses to Ashley, and then in a midnight raid stole their horses back. At daylight the red marauders opened fire on Ashley and his companions.

In the face of this disaster, for Ashley was caught unawares, word must be sent to the upper country, to warn Henry. But who would carry the message through these hostile camps?

In such emergencies real men naturally rise to their opportunities. The young man who rose to this one was none other than Jedediah Strong Smith, of whom we have heard in the story of Ross. One of fourteen children, Smith had left his home in Chenango County, New York, to make

his own way in the West. He had reached St. Louis too late to join Ashley's band that had just left under Henry's command.

Smith set to work and waited his chance. It came this year when Ashley in person led his second little army up the river against the blockade of the fierce and tricky "Rees." The young New Yorker here had his baptism of fire fighting side by side with William Sublette, David Jackson, and others of this heroic band.

All were astonished when young Jed stepped up and pledged himself to General Ashley to "carry the message to Henry." He was allowed to go, and friendship warmed right then in the heart of General Ashley toward this intrepid youngster. It remained to the end of the lives of both men, for Ashley became executor of Jedediah Smith's estate.

Trusted with words of tragic import, young Smith with one companion slipped away in the dead of night and began to steal through the Indian encampment. Nothing stopped their stealthy progress until the day began to break; then they came upon two sleepy mounted watchers of the "Rees." The Indians had not yet seen them.

"Thou shalt not kill!" must have flashed through Jedediah's religiously trained heart. He was a man who carried his Bible with his rifle. But this was a time when killing, if ever, was justified. The Rees had killed and they were ready to kill again.

Smith and his companion shot down these red men that blocked their way, seized the Indians' frightened horses, and were up and away across the hills in a moment. A forced ride of some days and nights brought the intrepid messengers to Henry's post at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

It was disheartening news that they brought to the brave old major. Henry himself needed reinforcements to fight back the Blackfeet; now he was called back to help Ashley break through the red blockade. The thing, it seemed, couldn't be done; but it must be done; and he did it.

Down the river in a keel boat partly laden with furs, hurried Henry with Smith and a number of mountaineers. They ran the blockade without difficulty, the treacherous "Rees" even making signs of friendship toward the passing boatmen, doubtless to lead them into a trap such as they had laid for Ashley.

With Henry and his men to reinforce him, the general turned back upstream to batter down the blockade.

Smith, meanwhile, had been sent on to St. Louis, entrusted to take there the load of furs that Henry's men had secured during the previous winter. When he came again a little later upstream, Smith found that the Aricara blockade had been broken and the way cleared to the mouth of the Yellowstone.

But the Blackfoot barrier lay yet ahead of the mountaineers. These fierce Indian lords of the Rockies had attacked the little band of Americans so savagely as to force them to take a more southerly way into the heart of the Rockies. The day of final reckoning with American mountaineers had not yet come for the Blackfeet.

Henry was suffering some more losses which were sure to be repaid with interest at a later time. In one of his brushes with the Blackfeet he had lost two of his brave men. In another fight four more of the mountaineers "bit the dust." Another serious loss previously had come not from Indians, but from a wild animal when old Hugh Glass was mauled almost to death by a grizzly.

Leading his brave little band onward, Henry, driven

aside by the Blackfeet onslaughts, went southward up the Big Horn River. He followed the Popo Agie branch of the Wind River.

Of this band of Americans to rediscover the South Pass, Andrew Henry was in personal command. Just which one of his men or detachments of men went through the pass on this first east-to-west trip is not certainly known. It may have been Henry himself, or Sublette, or Fitzpatrick, or Provot, or some unknown trapper led by any of these. This, however, was not the real discovery of the great gateway. It had been found years before by the three Kentucky hunters, Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson, while trailing homeward in 1811 with their companion Miller.

This does not lessen the importance of the fine work of discovery and exploration accomplished by Andrew Henry and his band. The Northern Mystery land lay still an unknown country; it was men from Henry's intrepid band of trappers that were to solve its secrets. These mountaineers stood now at the gateway ready to plunge into the heart of the richest beaver country Americans had ever known, and in searching out its streams for furs, they were destined to blaze the trails and the Inland Empire for the pioneers to follow.

Henry established his next outpost on one of the branches of the Green — probably Henry's Fork. Detachments of his men were sent out from here to follow the fur-bearing streams. Very soon a rich harvest of peltries began to pour in.

Thomas Fitzpatrick and his trappers, following up the Green, struck beaver so thick they lost caution in their excitement over their fortune. The next thing they knew their horses had been stolen. Indians had found a good chance to make a raid while the whites were busy.

But Fitzpatrick was not to be thus outwitted. Fine

mountaineer that he was, he trailed the thieves and stole the horses back again in the most approved Indian fashion. He even took many of their own for interest. Then, loading the animals down with the peltries he had gathered, he trailed back to Henry's camp.

A little later a pack train laden with furs trailed out through the South Pass down the Sweetwater and the Platte for St. Louis. This great overland route was thus opened to the commerce of America.

Andrew Henry had made good his resolve. Battling his way back into the heart of the Rockies he had regained his fortune. The Blackfeet were yet to be punished; but the men he had trained would take care of that. At least the red blockade up the Yellowstone had been broken and the trail along the Platte had been opened for American enterprise in the Rockies.





“He climbed the canyon walls to a point where he could see the lake as it glistened in the sun.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

DISCOVERING AMERICA'S "INLAND SEA"

THE secret of secrets hidden in the heart of the Mystery Land was the great inland sea. Flashing there in sunlight and starlight, its briny waters had been rocked by the restless winds for ages; no white man's eye had ever seen this wonder of our continent. Only vague rumors from the Indians had come to their ears of this mysterious landlocked sea, whose waters were so briny as almost to burn the skin.

These Indian stories had excited the curiosity of the whites for years. The map makers had made wild guesses as to the mystery lake; but nearly a quarter of the nineteenth century had passed away before any white man came upon the lake to taste its waters and to prove the Indian stories true.

Who was this white discoverer of our Great Dead Sea?

Historians have waged a bitter controversy over this question. The contention has centered mainly about the question whether Jedediah Strong Smith first came upon the Great Salt Lake from the northwest, or Provot from the south, or Jim Bridger down the Bear River from the northeast. We know that these men all did find the lake at about the same time.

And no wonder. Many historians did not know it, but they were all members of the same general party of mountaineers. Each was serving with one of the detachments of Ashley's men in the work of hunting through the mountain region in search of furs.

Major Henry, as already said, had divided his mountaineer band into various groups under different leaders. Of Fitzpatrick's adventure up the Green River we have

heard. Another detachment under Jedediah Smith, we have also learned, made a long trip across the mountains toward the Northwest, where it fell in with the British trader Ross and wintered at Flathead Post. Etienne Provot, a French trapper, led still another band across the northeastern rim of the Mystery Land on to the Provo River (named after Provot) and established himself on little Lake Utah. And William Sublette with the main body of the expedition also penetrated the Mystery Land into the Cache Valley — so named because of an interesting incident over some caches of furs found there. Of this incident more will be told later.

What man of these various detachments first saw the great inland sea?

Provot may have done so, but if he did so, we have no certain record of his discovery. Smith, we know, did come staggering upon the lake after a terrible trip across the American desert; this was after its discovery, however, by one of Sublette's men — the boy of the band.

Now comes to the fore the freshman of the party. This was James Bridger. Just as seniors in college give the freshmen hard jobs to do, so these old mountain men picked on Bridger, for the hardest "stunt" they could think of.

They wanted to know into what sea the Bear River emptied. Tradition had it that it reached the ocean south of the Columbia.

To solve the mystery, they started young Bridger off in a canoe from their camp. And thus they made him, boy as he was, hardly yet out of his teens, the discoverer of the Great Salt Lake.

To perform this feat, Bridger in his canoe floated down Bear River from the Cache Valley camp, while the older men left behind made wagers on what he should find.



D. S. Spencer, Union Pacific System

Antelope Island, Great Salt Lake, named from the wild herds that once inhabited it.

He was warned by roaring waters ahead that a canyon lay on his route. He landed and climbed the canyon walls of the Bear to a point where he could gain a fine view of the great lake, as it glistened in the sun.

Canoeing on down the river for about twenty miles, Bridger pushed out into the Bear River Bay — an arm of the Great Salt Lake. He tasted the water and found it brackish. Hastening back to the mountaineer camp in the Cache Valley, the young Kentuckian reported that he had found an arm of the ocean.

On the monument over James Bridger's grave in Mount Washington Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri, are engraved the words "Discoverer of the Great Salt Lake." The honor rightly belongs to this daring mountaineer.

When Bridger's exciting message of discovery came, Sublette and his trappers rushed down through Boxelder and Weber counties, Utah, into Salt Lake valley. Here a little later all three parties of mountaineers united — those under Smith, Sublette, and Provot. Americans were at last on guard in the Great Basin, and it was to be a land of mystery no more.

In the meantime, what of the famous old veteran, Andrew Henry? He turned back for St. Louis, from his Green River camp, going out of the mountains by way of the Big Horn and the Missouri. This was the last ever heard of him.

He had done his work, and we must never forget that a most important part of it was in leading the Kentucky hunters, Hoback, Rezner, and Robinson over the Rockies so that they were in a position to discover the South Pass and announce it to their countrymen away back in 1812.

The Great Salt Lake had been discovered; but the mystery of this great inland sea was still unsolved. What was its outlet to the ocean? This secret had yet to be unraveled and the Mystery Land must yet be explored before it could be made ready for its pioneers.

Who were the men to do it? How was this work of mapping our last frontier finally accomplished?





“Up the Saskatchewan in their canoes the Hudson’s Bay Company was rushing its men.”

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

REBLAZING THE OVERLAND TRAIL

DURING the year in which young Bridger discovered the Great Salt Lake the race between the British and the Americans for the great Northwest was at its height. Up the Saskatchewan in their canoes, the Hudson’s Bay Company was rushing its men and supplies. Up the Platte Ashley and his men, with pack trains, were opening the road for the ox-teams to follow.

The determined men of the mountains, of both nations, who were sweeping through the canyons of the Rockies, reaping a rich harvest of peltries from every stream, must have supplies to “carry on.” Some one must also take back goods for the Indian trade. The side which could find the easier and shorter route for this transportation would come out the winner.

Ashley’s men, like the British, had first followed the water routes of the West. The tortuous Missouri-Yellowstone rivers had been their long winding way into the

West. The canoe and the keel boat had been their main means of transportation.

Luckily, as it afterward proved, Ashley had no particular love for the boatman's song. His eye was keen for business, and he was willing to cast aside the water way for any better one that offered. The coming of Fitzpatrick with his fur-laden pack train down the Platte trail doubtless gave Ashley the determining suggestion of an overland route to the West. He immediately entered upon the serious task of opening his way not only for men and pack trains, but for ox-trains.

In person the general led his next band along the overland route into the Rockies. Strangely enough, this first recorded trip from east to west along the Oregon-Salt-Lake Trail was made, like the trip of the Astorian message bearers, in the dead of winter. Ashley's march was paralleled with the same natural difficulties that beset Stuart and his men when they blazed this trail from west to east. And both of these heroic bands battered their way victoriously through the obstacles.

It was November 3, 1824 when Ashley struck out west from Fort Atkinson, a military post near the famous Council Bluffs. Their first discouraging experience came in the form of a three-day snowstorm, which blinded and bewildered them while they were searching for a Pawnee village from which they had hoped to get more supplies. Their next discouragement was to find the village deserted. Ashley did not know of the custom of these Indians to have summer villages which they used for the farming and harvest season only.

One of these deserted villages was finally found by two of Ashley's scouts, Moses Harris and Jim Beckworth. Finding no food there, the two men, in a starving condition, struck straight back for the Missouri. Harris gave out

and Beckworth was staggering along the trail to get aid, when Indians came upon him.

The Indians took Beckworth to be one of their own tribe. He was a half-breed, the son of a Southern planter and a negro woman. They immediately set to work to bring the supposed Indian safely out of his starving condition.

Their Indian way of doing this was interesting. First they fed him a few spoonfuls of corn meal gruel; then, an Indian holding each of the famished man's arms, they would run him back and forth until they were all tired. Again they would feed the patient and again give him vigorous exercise.

Harris was found, meanwhile, and given similar treatment. Then after many small portions of gruel, interspersed with much running, both men were set down before a tempting dish of buffalo meat, wild turkeys, and boiled vegetables. Both ate their fill and after a few days of kindly treatment at the hands of their Indian friends, they gained strength to go on and rejoin Ashley's band.

Harris and Beckworth remained in the mountains for many years thereafter. One day when Beckworth was out trapping with Jim Bridger, he was captured by the Crows and lived with this tribe as its great war chief. Harris also had varied experiences; he was still in the West in 1847, when Brigham Young and his followers entered the mountain land. Harris and Jim Bridger were found by these pioneers near the South Pass, and Harris had a tale to tell of over a score of years of mountaineering!

Ashley's difficulties seemed to multiply as he marched on. He was keenly disappointed not to find an inhabited Pawnee village. Worse still, the blizzards one after another kept sweeping down from the mountains onto

his unsheltered men and horses. The animals were so benumbed with cold they could hardly move.

They were not like the hardy Indian ponies. Had they been such cayuses as those bred in the mountain land, they might far better have weathered the blizzards. Mackenzie and Ross, who used the Indian ponies, were filled with admiration for these sturdy little beasts when they saw the cayuses go digging with their front hoofs like reindeer through the snow for the grass beneath it. Sometimes they would dig to a depth of three to four feet for the food. They thrived upon this exercise and frozen fare.

Ashley's tenderly raised horses began to wither away in the storms. During two weeks he was able to advance only ten or twelve miles.

They abandoned the colder country of the Loup Fork of the Platte, cut southward to the main river, and there found rushes and plenty of small game in the island willows. Both men and horses improved, but gloomy must have been the camps along this desolate route, for Beckworth, after a life full of hardship and adventure, wrote of them:

"A duller encampment, I suppose, was never witnessed. No jokes, no fireside stories, no fun. Each man rose in the morning with the gloom of the previous night filling his countenance. We built our fire and partook of our scanty repast without saying a word."

Pressing on 100 miles farther up the Platte, they came upon the Pawnee Indians, whose deserted village they had previously found. The tribe was moving, with its squaws and papooses, south to its wintering grounds on the Arkansas.

A friendly old chief of the Pawnees, after sending much meat to the white men, invited Ashley over for a feast.

The American and the Indian leaders smoked while the Indian told the white man of the perils before him. The chief explained that there was only one place — at the forks of the Platte — where any wood was to be found. He advised Ashley to go into winter quarters there, or he and all his men would surely perish before they reached the mountains.

But Ashley and his mountaineers pressed on despite this warning. A little later they came upon another band of Pawnees. It was the Loup band under a chief named Two-Ax.

Indians and whites traveled together to the forks of the Platte. Here they camped together and went into a general conference. Ashley smoked and feasted with the Indians, and then expressed a desire to move on, up the south fork of the Platte.

“Oh, no!” said the wily chief, Two-Ax. “If you go now you will frighten off the buffalo and my men are about to make a surround. You must stay here four days and then you can go.”

Ashley was in Two-Ax’s country. He was a militia general with a military bent, but he decided to stay. He was not in the country for a fight, except to conquer a hostile winter.

While they lingered, he and his men saw one of those wonderful spectacles of the plains — a buffalo surround.

The Indians left camp, a few at a time. In two or three hours they had a solid mass of buffalo surrounded, the circumference of the circle being about six miles. Then, at a signal from the chief, all the hunters charged at once, those nearest repeating the order on to those farthest away.

In a little while the field looked like an immense slaughter pen. Floundering on the ground, mortally wounded,

with arrows protruding from their sides lay fully 1400 buffalo. The squaws now came out with knives and stone



“The squaws now came out to prepare the meat and hides.”

scraping instruments to prepare the meat and hides.

The brave who had killed the most buffalo was the lion of the hour. He was acclaimed on all sides, while the awkward youth who had scored lowest of all, was the butt of jokes by the young squaws. In this respect the young Indian proved himself to be quite like other young folk.

Ashley and his men now departed without molestation. They went up the south branch of the Platte instead of up the north fork, along which the pioneer settlers of later days mostly made their way. The north branch of the Platte, however, Ashley was destined to open as a horse trail in the following year; so that to him belongs the honor of opening both branches of the trail to the West.

As they climbed on up the slopes, the snow became so deep it would have stopped Ashley and his band but for an unusual circumstance. Buffalo trailed up and down the river, on both banks, beating a good trail, and exposing grass so that the horses could live.

Some Indian messengers joined Ashley near a little grove of cottonwood. He noticed that when they left they tied bundles of the wood to their backs for fuel — a gloomy promise of the kind of country lying ahead. He rested eleven days at the cottonwood grove, and then on January 11, 1825, took up the march again toward the Rockies.

These mountains now appeared in the purple distance above the western horizon. For twenty days Ashley pressed on to reach the heights he could see ahead.

On February 4 the party encamped in a thick grove of cottonwoods. On the bark of these the horses of the band fed with evident relish. While their animals took on strength, Ashley's men made little forays to the north and south to find game for themselves.

How fierce the blizzards had been, three Indian visitors revealed. They were Arapahoes who came telling that they were all that were left of a party of sixty or seventy warriors who had undertaken to follow Ashley's trail. The Pawnees had told them of the band of white men who were west-bound toward the Rockies. All but these three had given out in the deep snow, or had lost heart and had turned back.

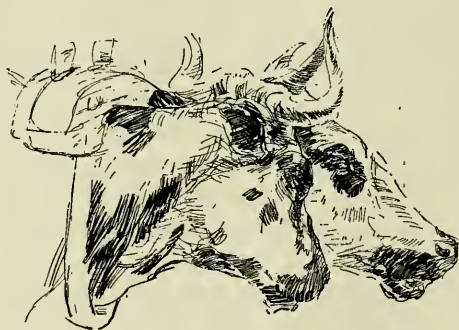
Ashley gave the three braves some presents and sent them away happy. He encountered snow five feet deep and had to go into camp at the river now known as the Laramie.

Later he moved slowly northward along the base of the Rockies until March 21, when he again attempted to cross. Making slow progress for six days, he at last made his way over the crest. It took "from the morning of the 27th until the night of the 1st of April," to cross the ridge which divides the waters of the Atlantic from those of the Pacific Ocean.

On the heights of the Rockies they used sagebrush for fuel and Ashley noted that "it burns as well and retains fire as long as any fuel I ever used."

They had crossed through a variant of the South Pass, now known as "Bridger's Pass." Thus ended the waterway of the Missouri as a chief route to the Rockies. Every year from now on the South Pass was to receive its groups of Americans, bound westward by way of the Platte.

This opening of the overland route was a master stroke not only for the American fur-trading business but for our country. Had Ashley clung to the Missouri and to canoes and keel boats, our country might have lost out in the famous race for the possession of the Northwest. It was a race of canoes plied by the paddles of the voyageurs up the Saskatchewan against ox-teams driven by "bull-whackers" along the Platte — and the ox-teams won.





“With amazing aptitude, they shoot down
the most frightful rapids.”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE LAST OF THE VOYAGEURS

AFTER Ashley, the great St. Louis fur merchant, and his men, following the trail of the Astorian messengers had opened up Platte River route westward to the Rockies, they stood as curious and mystified adventurers upon the bank “of a beautiful river running south.” It was the Green or Spanish River, a stream about 150 yards wide, “of a bold current and generally so deep that it presents but few places suitable for fording.”

Ashley had found a horseback route to the Pacific, but it was not to be supposed that his French voyageurs, who had abandoned their favorite canoe for the saddle, would give up all at once the work that had made them famous explorers through three or four generations.

As a duck takes to the water, so these voyageurs of Ashley’s party took to the current of the Green River.

These hardy Frenchmen were descendants and friends

of the men who had paddled Hearn's canoes to the Arctic Circle, and had gone with Mackenzie and Fraser to the Pacific, and with Radisson all round the Great Lakes when he discovered them. They did not sense it at the time, but they were now standing on the brink of the only river left in America, that was virgin water for an exploring voyageur's canoe.

They begged Ashley to let them go down this beautiful river. He consented and they started on the final journey of the kind that won a fame everlasting for their breed in America.

Singing possibly the same boatmen's songs that resounded along the banks of the Mississippi as their kind paddled La Salle and Marquette to the greatest of their discoveries, these boatmen headed out into the stream, in a boat made of buffalo hides, from animals they themselves had shot.

The date of their "shove off" was the 21st of April, 1825, and their destination was — wherever the river might lead them; for even the Indians along its banks did not know then where it finally reached the sea.

Some called it the Spanish River, for they knew it flowed on into the Spanish territory near Santa Fe. Others called it the Seeds-kee-dee, which was the Ute Indian word for sage hen. The river valley abounded in these motherly birds and their broods of young.

With Ashley on this final triumph of river-way exploration were six of his voyageurs. Of his other men, he sent six northward, to explore the sources of the river; he dispatched seven westward toward the Bear River mountains; and six were directed southward, where many branches poured their waters into the Green River.

These detachments left with instructions to find the men of Ashley's parties operating west of the Rockies —

the men who were exploring the neighborhood of the Great Salt Lake and the Wasatch canyons through which the mountain streams went leaping down into the land of the Northern Mystery.

All were to return to Green River on July 10th for a general rendezvous — a town meeting, a county fair, and a round-up for good fellowship all rolled into one. It was the first rendezvous ever scheduled by Americans for a point west of the continental divide. Ashley was to mark a spot as he descended the river as the place at which they were to assemble for the rendezvous.

And so it was that the members of this exploring party pushed off into the mid-channel of the Green.

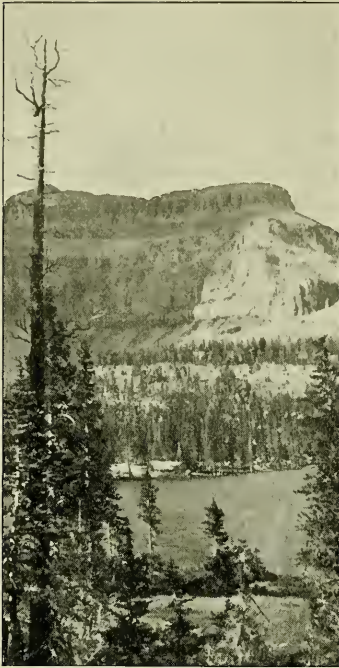
A 15-mile run downstream brought these explorers work that only first pathfinders in a country have a right to do. They found a stream running in from the east, and had to give it its name.

"We gave it the name of Sandy," wrote Ashley of this trip. And "Sandy," it was to hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the days before the railroads took the difficulties and adventure out of pioneer journeys to the West.

Forty miles from the point of embarkation the voyageurs complained of their boat. It was overloaded. It lacked the points their experienced eyes knew it should have. So they halted and built another — and thus divided up the party. They were on their way again on the 24th.

From the west side a river flowed into the Green — to be named the Black, in honor of one of Ashley's men. Soon they encountered another branch — named Henry's Fork, in Andrew Henry's honor.

"On Saturday, May 2," wrote Ashley, "we entered between the walls of this range of mountains, which approach at this point to the water's edge on either side



"The walls of these mountains at this point rise almost perpendicular to an immense height."

of the river and rise almost perpendicular to an immense height.

"The channel of the river is here contracted to the width of sixty or seventy yards, and the current much increased in velocity as it rolled along in angry submission to the serpentine walls that directed it. It seemed constantly to threaten us with danger."

Thus the explorers passed through Flaming Gorge Canyon, as a prelude to steering their boats through Horseshoe and Kingfisher canyons.

Perhaps the skill of voyageurs was never better attested than in what Ashley recorded of them

in his diary for Sunday, May 3. They were now in the famous Red Canyon.

"After progressing two miles the navigation became difficult and dangerous, the river being remarkably crooked with more or less rapids every mile, caused by rocks which had fallen from the sides of the mountain. Many of these rose above the surface of the water and required our greatest exertions to avoid them.

"At twenty miles from our last camp the roaring and agitated state of the water a short distance before us

indicated a fall or some other obstruction of considerable magnitude.

"Our boats were consequently rowed to shore, along which we cautiously descended to the place from whence the danger was to be apprehended.

"It proved to be a perpendicular fall of ten or twelve feet produced from large fragments of rock which had fallen from the mountain and settled in the river. They extended across its channel, forming an impregnable barrier to the passage of loaded water craft.

"We were therefore obliged to unload our boats of their cargoes and pass them empty over the falls by means of long cords which we had provided for such purposes. At sunset our boats were reloaded and we descended a mile lower down and encamped."

How difficult it is for us to judge any event after we have lost touch with the spirit and resources of those who participated!

Ashley's voyageurs led him safely past these falls, for their ears were attuned to river sounds, as the ears of the mountaineers were attuned to mountain sounds, and those of the plainsmen to the stampede and the noises of prairie lands.

In another score of years this race of voyageurs was to disappear almost as completely as if they had never existed. Americans, without their aid, tried to follow down this treacherous waterway. J. W. Powell, the Government explorer, tried it forty-four years after Ashley. He lost one boat in the canyon. Theodore Hook of Cheyenne, Wyoming, tried to follow Powell through, and his boat went to pieces against a treacherous rock in the Upper Rapids. Hook was buried in the canyon—a martyr to untrained American daring in boatmanship.

It was easy, therefore, for Powell on seeing the name

"Ashley 1825" painted high on the mountain wall overhanging these canyon falls, to believe the story of some of his guides. This was that Ashley was wrecked, with the loss of all of his party save one; and that he then, with this companion, had made his way overland to the Mormon settlement in Salt Lake valley, where he worked on the Mormon temple until he earned enough money to return east to his friends!

Ashley, as we have seen, commenced the written history of these mountain valleys when he painted his name on the cliff above the Red Canyon falls — since called the Ashley Falls in his honor. He passed on, unterrified, and soon found an end to canyon falls.

On Tuesday, May 5, he found a place, he wrote, "where the mountains gradually recede from the water's edge and the river expands to a width of 250 yards, leaving the river bottoms on each side from 100 to 300 yards wide, interspersed with clusters of small willows.

"We remained at our encampment of this day until the morning of the 7th, when we descended ten miles down and encamped on a spot of ground where several thousand Indians had wintered during the past season. Their camp had been judiciously selected for defense and the remains of their work around it accorded with the judgment exercised in the selection.

"Many of their lodges remained as perfect as when occupied. They were made of poles two or three inches in diameter, set up in circular form and covered with cedar bark."

These were the lodges of the mountain Utes — most mysterious of all Western Indians, and the tribe which remained to the last untamed and devoted to its ancient religious ceremonials. Ashley found them in "Brown's Hole," soon to become famous in trapper annals.



Union Pacific System

One of the numerous tributary streams flowing from the Uinta Mountains to the Green River.

Down through the rapids of Lodore went the explorer and his skillful boatmen. They unloaded their boats at the Lodore rapids — where Powell later lost a second boat, and named the place where he lost it, “Disaster Falls.”

They passed the mouth of Uinta River, whose name Ashley recorded as the Indians spoke it to him. Indians told him of a trail leading up this river, and back to the spot at the mouth of Henry’s Fork of the Green, which he had designated as the rendezvous.

He unloaded his boats here and passed on down the river fifty miles farther to a point near where the Rio Grande Railroad and the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to San Diego now cross it. This was the same old trail Escalante had taken when he penetrated the Mystery Land, only to be bogged and beaten in the slushy mud of its forbidding deserts.

There Ashley’s voyageurs made the last camp down the Green. They bought horses of the Utes, who met them clad in furs, ascended the Uinta, with Ashley’s goods

packed Indian-fashion on the horses' backs, and then made their way back to the rendezvous, through a maze of little streams and valleys, and over the top of the Uintas near what is now called Mount Baldy.

Of all who knew the voyageurs to whom we must now bid adieu, Alexander Ross, the British explorer, paid them perhaps the most tender tribute of regard.

"They sing," he wrote, "to keep time to their paddles; they sing to keep off drowsiness caused by their fatigue; they sing because the bourgeois (their Hudson's Bay Company commander) likes it.

"Through hardship and dangers, wherever he leads, they are sure to follow with alacrity and cheerfulness, over mountains and hills, along valleys and dales, through woods and creeks, across lakes and rivers.

"They look neither to the right nor to the left; they make no halt in foul or fair weather. Such is their skill that they venture to sail in the midst of waters like oceans, and, with amazing aptitude, they shoot down the most frightful rapids. They generally come off safe.

"When about arrived at the place of their destination, they dress with neatness, put on their plumes and a chosen song is raised.

"They push up against the beach as if they meant to dash the canoe to splinters. But they most adroitly back their paddles at the right moment, whilst the foreman springs on shore and, seizing the prow, arrests the vessel in its course."

These picturesque old-timers disappeared from untraveled river-ways in 1825, but in 1826 they performed still another feat. It was to paddle a canoe around the shores of Great Salt Lake — vainly seeking its outlet to the ocean! This last exploring expedition was taken to help solve the great problem of the Northern Mystery.



“There was much to talk about, and strange tales of the mountains to tell.”

CHAPTER TWENTY

TALES TOLD AT A RENDEZVOUS

It was a most remarkable group that met General Ashley at the first rendezvous of Americans over the rim of the Rockies. The leader had sent out word for all his mountaineers to meet him “on or before July 10, 1825, near the mouth of the Henry’s Fork of the Green.” And they came — Americans, Frenchmen, with Indian half-breeds, and the Indian wives of the trappers.

Ashley, coming up after his long struggle to cross the great divide, found the camp about twenty miles from the point he had designated. There were two camps, indeed, much to his surprise. In one were ninety-one of Ashley’s own men; in the other were twenty-nine strangers — trappers of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who had fatefully deserted and had come to Ashley’s camp with furs to sell, little dreaming of the international row they were stirring up.

There was much to talk about now, and some strange tales of the mountains to tell.

First in tragic interest was the tale brought by Etienne Provot, the French leader after whom the Provo River and Provo, Utah, were called. He had led away about twenty of Ashley's men into the rich regions; only a few had returned with him. The rest were victims of the first Indian massacre within the Great Basin's sheltering walls.

As Provot related the story at the rendezvous it revealed almost the only case ever known where an Indian Chief "betrayed his smoke." The tale he told filled the mountaineers with a lust for vengeance they were never quite able to satisfy. They obtained from Provot a full description of the red demon who had perpetrated the massacre, and for the next ten years they hunted for him in every nook and cranny in the Rockies. But they never crossed his trail again.

Provot's story of misfortune ran thus:

He and his men had worked westward during the spring of 1824 into the Wasatch Mountains, and to the shores of Utah Lake. There they fell in with a band of Snakes. Provot was an experienced frontiersman, but he had gained his experience with Indians farther north, who did not have the traits of the robbers of the mountains.

The chief of this Indian band whom Provot, because of some deformity of the Indian, called Mauvais Gauche, invited Provot to smoke. The mountaineer and his men settled down with the Indians to pass the pipe of peace around. The chief asked the whites to lay their guns aside, as it was "bad medicine" to have metal around the calumet. The whites foolishly obeyed, not taking the precaution to look for tomahawks under the Indians' blankets.

All was going well with the party when at a signal

the Indians whipped out their tomahawks and knives, and fell upon their unarmed guests. Most of the whites were killed at the first onslaught. A few reached their weapons and made a fight for life. Among those that survived was Provot himself, a powerful man, who was not to be easily overwhelmed. He and three or four others escaped, leaving seventeen of his men dead on the field of battle. How many Indians were killed, we do not know.

The Snake, or Shoshone Indians, who perpetrated this outrage must have been a war party in desperate need of guns. Generally this tribe had been most friendly. When Ramsay Crooks was westbound on his first journey to the Columbia, Snake Indians saved his life.

As Crooks himself told this story of the good-heartedness of these Indians, he and John Day became so weak while passing over the Snake River desert, that they made a fire and settled down to rest. They had some roots they intended to cook, not knowing they were poisonous, when boiled. Their fire unhappily went out and for a day and a half they lay in the torpor.

When at last they awoke they found two Shoshone Indians bending over them. The Indians had a good fire burning, and a supply of water for them to drink. They fed the starved white men and showed them how to cook the roots so they would not be poisonous. They left two pounds of venison on their departure, as an offering of kindness, and this, with a wolf shot by John Day, nourished the travelers back to strength.

Such a kindly spirit toward the whites the Shoshones had always shown. What made these Indians, then, betray their ceremonial smoke and turn against Provot? This massacre remains one of the unsolved mysteries of the mountains. It is the only instance of foul treachery recorded of this tribe.

*Union Pacific System*

Weber River, Utah, named after one of Ogden's trappers who was slain on its banks.

Another most interesting story told at this rendezvous was brought by one of Ashley's trappers named Johnson Gardner. It explained the presence of the Hudson's Bay men at Ashley's rendezvous.

Gardner had spent the season trapping the tributaries of the Great Salt Lake, especially Weber and Ogden rivers. Here he had come upon the Hudson's Bay trappers. Twenty-nine of these, for reasons of their own, had deserted the Hudson's Bay Company and come over to trade their peltries to the Americans. Here they were, ready to do business with Ashley.

Was it honorable, under the circumstances, for Ashley to buy these furs for cash? Gentlemen in the British Parliament debated the question with gentlemen in the United States Congress for two generations; and even then they failed to find a satisfying answer.

At the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters, Fort Vancouver, which had recently been built on the north bank of the Columbia, a great cry of "Robber!" went up. It was transmitted quickly overseas to England and was echoed by the gentlemen stockholders of the company.

In America, where Ashley came to sudden wealth from his mountain expedition, it was said he dug the furs out of a cache belonging to Peter Skene Ogden. Another story was that he found Ogden near the place later called Ogden's Hole, and now Ogden City, and took his furs in a pitched battle. There was still another version — that Ashley found Ogden starving and relieved his wants at the price of giving up his fur supply.

After all these years, it is easier to clear up the mystery. Some of the records of the Hudson's Bay Company recently brought to light are illuminating.

Ogden and his men represented a great corporation, which had some seven or eight degrees of glory. There were "senior gentlemen" and "junior gentlemen." Besides these were other degrees, each of which had its own code. A visitor to Chief Factor McLoughlin's fort had to dress ceremoniously for dinner. Under the system no man was free to barter for himself. All must bring their furs to the company — to sell at the company's price, and receive goods in return at the company's price.

Ashley knew nothing of this complicated feudal system. According to his training in a country whose enemies had sneeringly said, "The dollar is king," Ashley felt himself free to trade with anybody who had beaver of his own catching. Ashley offered dollars — more than twice as much money as the British had offered these same men. And Ashley got their peltries.

The Hudson's Bay men doubtless brought to Ashley's camp old resentments against their old employers. Both

Ross and Ogden have recorded many rows in their trapping expeditions, due to discontent over company charges for goods, and the company price for furs. Even when old Pierre, the Iroquois Indian, who deserted the British after many quarrels about prices, was reported to Hudson's Bay headquarters as having been massacred, the Factor immediately bethought himself of charges they had against Pierre's account which would justify them in seizing all of his Canadian property.

We, in America, probably little know how much we are indebted to our natural way of going about things for our success in winning the West. Ogden and his Britishers could bring no wives to the Utah country, could build no homes, could make no permanent settlement. It was all wanted as a Hudson's Bay Company wilderness. The servants of this company might ride in — but they must ride out again, with each season's pack to turn through the proper channels into the company's trade.

American ox-carts trundled in with mothers and babies, axes to cut wood for the cabins and for the hearth fires, and plows to work the soil.

This was something quite as different in possessing the land as was Ogden's way from Ashley's way of getting furs. Ogden and Ross both wrote of their astonishment that the Americans could pay \$5 and more for a skin when their price was \$2 only. And about these different ways of "getting on" hangs one of the Great West's prettiest tales.

Once France held all of Canada, with the church and the state, daughter of the church, counting for everything and the individual for little or nothing. To understand how dearly this cost her we must know a little more about the Frenchman of Three Rivers, Quebec, who had been captured by Indians and had found the rich fur-bearing

countries about the Great Lakes. He gained his freedom, obtained a fortune in furs — and was thrown into jail for trapping without a permit! A greedy governor had looked upon him covetously upon his return.

To this incident America owed much. Ashley was the first American to reap great advantage of it. This same Frenchman, Radisson, on gaining his liberty from jail, fled to England, told his story to Prince Rupert, and came back under Rupert's direction to found the Hudson's Bay Company, with posts at Albany River, Moose River, and Rupert River, all on Hudson Bay. The fortune in furs with which Radisson returned to England brought the British post-haste to give the French battle for Canada and all the northern wilderness. The imprisoning of Radisson for free fur-hunting resulted finally in the battle between Montcalm and Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, which ended French domination in America.

The British might have won the whole Great Basin region and the Columbia had they only gone at things in the American way. One of their subordinates, a lad named Anthony Hendry, from the Isle of Wight, worked his way from Hudson's Bay to the Saskatchewan River in 1754. He fell in with Indians different from any others he had ever seen. They were mounted on horses. The Assiniboines who came to Hudson Bay, had never been seen except with paddle and canoe.

When Hendry reported what he had found, the chiefs of the Hudson's Bay Company laughed at this poor lieutenant. "Indians on horseback!" He must be crazy. Whoever heard of an Indian on horseback? They jeered and jeered until poor Hendry was glad to slip out of the company's service.

Yet the Indians he had met were horsemen. They were the Blackfeet, with whom Prince Rupert's retainers

might have ridden across the Rockies, into the country of the Grand Tetons, and on down to the Bear River and the Great Salt Lake. All this country then was war



A mounted Blackfoot Indian.

territory of the Blackfeet. They lorded over it as they pleased, keeping other tribes in a constant state of fear.

The jeering feudalists by ignoring Hendry, as the French had ignored Radisson, left this country for Lewis and Clark to penetrate by the Blackfoot passes, and for Ashley to win by way of the South Pass, and the beaver streams around Timpanogos and the Uinta Mountains!

Now the men of the Hudson's Bay Company were left to cry aloud at their misfortunes. Their retainers meanwhile, full of resentment toward them, traded their

beaver pelts to Ashley at the rendezvous, and took their new outfits from Ashley instead of reporting back to a Hudson's Bay Company post for them, as dutiful servants most respectfully ought to have done.

Ashley returned to St. Louis in 1825 with beaver enough to make him rich. It was the Northern Mystery Land's first gift of a fortune to America!

At St. Louis, on their arrival on October 8, the party was met with booming cannon and cheers from thousands of throats. They were cheers for the Far West, for the Uintas, for Cache Valley, for Timpanogos, for Great Salt Lake, for the South Pass! All these now became familiar in household stories in St. Louis and New York. And it was no longer considered thinkable that any country but America could gain a foothold there.

The rendezvous beyond the Rockies became now an annual event during the next few balmy years in the fur trade. But it was not always held in the same place; the place of meeting was changed as the new fur regions were opened. One rendezvous was held on the Weber near the Great Salt Lake; another was held in Cache Valley. Still another later was held in Pierre's Hole to settle accounts with the Blackfeet. Then came the rendezvous in Brown's Hole at which the final rendezvous at Sutter's Fort was planned.

How history-making in the West was bound up with these gatherings of the American mountaineers we shall learn later in this story.

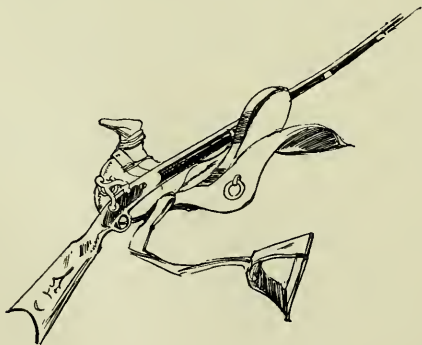
Ashley's day in the mountains closed with the trip he made there during the next year, 1826. It was then he blazed the wagon trail up the North Platte by bringing into the mountains and over the South Pass the first wheels that ever rolled along the trail. These wheels bore a cannon drawn by a pair of mules.

In withdrawing from active service in the mountains Ashley did not lose interest in the fur-trading game. He still helped to carry on the business from St. Louis; later also when elected to represent Missouri in Congress he became a wise counselor in the opening up of the West. More than this he left the fur-trading business in the West in good hands.

A new company headed by Ashley's most trusted young lieutenants was formed. Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, and Milton Sublette entered a partnership and bought out their old employer's interests in the mountains. Their agreement still is to be seen in the historical archives of Missouri — a bill of sale by the pen of Jedediah Smith — which is headed —

“Near the Grand Lake West of the Rocky Mountains,
July 18, 1826.”

This is the second business paper of which we have sure record as having been drafted in the land of the Northern Mystery. The first was the one drawn up by Father Escalante half a century before.





"Gaily did this little cavalcade set out to penetrate the mystery region."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

DARING THE SOUTHWESTERN DESERTS

Now that Smith, Jackson, and Sublette found themselves monarchs of the mighty Western mountains, what were they going to do with the great untamed region?

They had no royally chartered company to order them about, as had the white masters of the country to the north of them.

There was no Spanish king to command them, or Mexican dictator to tell them what to do, as there was in the country to the south and west.

As free Americans their own government, even, offered no suggestions and promised no rule over them. They were beyond the boundaries of the Union, and of the hope of help, except from bold mountaineers just like themselves.

First of all, as they looked about, they decided that somebody must explore for new country, somebody must trap in the country they already held, and somebody must journey back and forth between the mountains and St. Louis. Sublette, as the best man for the Platte coun-

try, was chosen to fetch and carry between the states and the Great Salt Lake. Jackson, a master trapper, was chosen to work the country already known. Jedediah Smith, he of the Bible and rifle as twin weapons, was chosen to seek out new beaver streams in the sections still unknown.

These new mountain leaders already knew that Great Salt Lake had no outlet and afforded no new beaver country, beyond what they found in its Wasatch tributaries. Shortly after the discovery of the inland sea by Bridger, Smith and Provot and others had visited it, and the four voyageurs had paddled all around it in a skin canoe. These explorers had reported terrific suffering from thirst with no new streams on the westward shore to relieve them.

The stout-hearted Jedediah found, when he questioned the Ute Indians, just what Father Escalante found in 1776. This was that they knew nothing of the country to the south and west of the Great Lake and knew of no trails leading that way.

To these Indians, as to the Spaniards, all this region was still a land unknown. Jedediah Strong Smith was determined to penetrate the puzzling region.

He packed up a portion of the goods Ashley had left with the new firm in the mountains. He noted down the price of this first Salt Lake bill of goods as follows:

Gunpowder, first and second quality	\$1.50	per pound
Lead, for making shot	1.00	" "
Shot	1.25	" "
Scarlet cloth	6.00	per piece
North West fusils	24.00	each
Sugar	1.00	per pound
Coffee	1.25	" "
Raisins	1.50	" "
Fourth-proof rum	13.50	" gallon

With these supplies for trade and other supplies for food, he was ready to strike out.

For this difficult journey into unknown lands, the expedition leader chose men who would never flinch. As it happened most of these men were destined so to die within a very short time.

Their names form an interesting roster of the changing status of mountain life. Instead of taking along Gabriel, Ignace, Basile, Etienne, and Antoine—the men most needed for river exploration,—Smith took with him James, Robert, Silas, Arthur, John, Martin, Daniel, and Peter—men famously quick on the trigger who could always be counted on to live up to the best Kentucky and Missouri traditions.

Gaily indeed did this little cavalcade of Utah trail makers set out, southward from the Weber, to find—what they might find. Here we have, then, the real genesis of the opening of the trail that Senator Clark's Salt Lake route later made so famous.

There were fifteen of them in all. They splashed through the waters of City Creek, soon to become famous as the stream whose waters were first taken out for Inter-mountain irrigation. Then on he went through the creeks from the two Cottonwood canyons, and through the river to which Provot had given his name. On past Timpanogos and south through the Escalante desert they journeyed to the Southwest.

Somewhere, possibly in the archives of Spain, lie the records of this journey, with the first correct maps ever drawn of the Great Basin, with the Great Salt Lake enshrined as its heart and center.

The first thing the Mexicans did when they found Smith among them was to have him and his men draw maps showing their route. Then they seized both maps and

diaries, and beat to death one of the two Indian guides Smith had employed while approaching Cajon Pass, the gateway from Utah to the California settlements.

The only record we have of this first trip from Utah to Southern California is a brief letter Smith sent to General William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, upon his return in 1827 to the "Little Lake of the Bear River," where the rendezvous for that year was held.

From this letter it appears that Smith and his men followed the Sevier River, which they named the Ashley. They missed Sevier Lake, and imagined that the Sevier River continued on north to Utah Lake. Leaving the Sevier they went south and crossed a divide to the waters of the River Virgin. On the Sevier they had found a band of Indians, the "Sampatches," who are still remembered in the name of Sanpete County, Utah. On the Virgin they met the Piute Indians.

From the Piutes, whom they called "Pa Ulches," they obtained some marble pipes, some flint knives and other implements, which they sent back to St. Louis, to become part of the first Far Western curio display.

They followed the Virgin to its mouth, crossed the Colorado and fell in with the Mohave Indians in the Mohave valley. Here they fared well. The Mohaves were farmers, and raised corn, beans, pumpkins, watermelons, muskmelons, wheat, and cotton.

"I was now nearly destitute of horses and had learned what it was to do without food. I therefore remained here fifteen days," Smith wrote.

These Indians knew of the Spanish settlements, and had horses they had stolen from them. They furnished Smith two guides, who led him westward across the barren salt plains of the Mohave Desert into the Cajon Pass, and on to the Mission San Gabriel. This was just such a mission

as Father Escalante had vainly wished to establish in the valley of Utah Lake.



Smith and his party fall in with the Mohave Indians.

Smith had now completed the projected exploration of Father Escalante. The American explorer had found a trail which might be made easily to connect historic Santa Fe, named after the city in Spain where Queen Isabella signed the commission of Columbus as an explorer, with Monterey, the most important Mexican port of California.

In one respect Smith, the successful explorer, had a great advantage over the self-sacrificing Father of Santa Fe. Smith reached the arid reaches of the Escalante Desert country in midsummer; while Escalante had reached them when the winter winds were blowing and slushy storms were changing the land into seas of cold, slippery mud.

At the Mission San Gabriel, Smith and his men were separated. Smith was hustled off to San Diego to see the Governor. His men meanwhile made bear traps for the mission overseers. These they wanted to help them catch

not bears, but sneak-thief Indians who might try to climb in a window in the night!

The Americans joined in the general festivities. Things were seemingly very prosperous. Fully 1000 Indians were at work in irrigated vineyards, orchards, and orange groves. The visitors saw, too, great herds of cattle, goats, and horses, and many horses running wild.

Here again was a civilization different from the American. Harrison Rogers, one of Smith's men, shrewdly noted in his diary, that "the Indians are kept in great fear; for the least offense they are corrected; they are complete slaves in every sense of the word."

He meant that the mission owned all the property. The Indians could not become homesteaders on their own farms, as American frontiersmen were anxious to do.

Smith also found from the Governor at San Diego that there were many things he could not do, and very few that he could do. They taught him what it meant to be where he was not wanted. They refused to let him strengthen his party by adding Americans who had already landed there from the crews of American ships in the harbor.

They refused to let him move northward through California to the Russian settlement at Bodega Bay. This precious Russian settlement was all bristling with cannon.¹

The Governor would let Smith turn around and go out precisely by the way he came in. That was all. But Smith had noted the High Sierras as he passed around their southern end. He felt that he could find new beaver streams. So he made a little plan all of his own.

Retreating to these mountains as if to obey the order of banishment, he cut northward along their western base,

¹ It is interesting to note that some of these cannon of brass were those left by Napoleon when he retreated from Moscow and that two of these world-famous guns, after service in California, were taken on to Utah by members of Cooke's Mormon Battalion who had helped in capturing California and in discovering gold at Sutter's Mill.

well inland from the Spanish settlements. He was not molested, for the Mexican was a lazy pursuer. He reached a point he concluded was directly west of his post on Weber River, Utah, and there he attempted to cross the High Sierras for a dash back to the Great Salt Lake. It was one of the most rashly daring journeys ever attempted in the Far West, for it carried Smith into waterless deserts that still test the stoutest of exploring hearts.

Luck at first was not with the intrepid explorer. His horses floundered in the deep snow and five of them starved to death.

Then one morning before daylight—the morning of May 20, 1827, Smith and two of his men made a dash for the mountain tops. The snow was from four to eight feet deep—but it was crusted over, and the crust was strong enough to bear up his animals. He took with him seven horses and two mules, loaded with hay for themselves and provisions for the men.

In eight days he crossed, losing only two horses and a mule. He was now, however, at the eastern foot of the Sierras, with the worst alkali desert in America between him and the pleasant streams of his beloved Wasatchrange.

And all of the heroism, the suffering, the pain of the next twenty days it took him to cross this alkali desert he compressed into these brief sentences:

“After traveling twenty days from the east side of Mt. Joseph (a Sierra Nevada peak) I struck the southwest corner of the Great Salt Lake, traveling over a country completely barren and destitute of game.

“We frequently traveled without water for two days over sandy deserts, where there was no sign of vegetation; and when we found water in some rocky hills, we most generally found some Indians who appeared the most miserable of the human race.”

“When we arrived at Salt Lake we had but one horse and one mule remaining, which were so feeble and poor that they could scarce carry the little camp equipage which I had along. The balance of my horses I was compelled to eat as they gave out.”

For years after Smith's journey the Piute Indians of Skull Valley, Utah, repeated the tradition that the first white men they ever saw were three who staggered, almost naked, in from the western desert, and were half crazy from breathing alkali dust.

Smith had found the new beaver streams of California, and had left his men to trap them. Henceforth this land, like the Great Basin, was to know its American men.

More significant still, in tracing the western rim of the Great Basin and in daring the Great American Desert, Jedediah Strong Smith solved the last great mystery of the Mystery Land. He had mapped and charted America's last frontier! In a way his service, even, had matched that of Lewis and Clark to the northward.



Smith held as a prisoner by the Mexicans.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO.

THE TRAGIC COST OF TRAIL BLAZING

JEDEDIAH SMITH was destined, soon after reporting the existence of the Great Basin, with its westward mountain walls, to taste the bitterness of massacres in both the direction of the Spanish settlements and the Hudson's Bay Company's northwest capital.

He closed his letter from "The Little Lake of Bear River," telling of his first California journey in these words: "The company is now starting, and therefore must close my communication."

This meant that he with a new force of men was off again for California, to join the detachment he had left on the westward slopes of the Sierras.

Smith did not again rashly tempt Death in the Great Salt Lake Desert. He had won his way through, coming

east, only because he tried it so early in the spring that the water holes in the rocks were not yet all dry. Instead of striking straight west, he again took the Salt Lake-Los Angeles trail he had blazed the previous year.

All went well until he reached the land of the Mohave Indians. These Indians, since Smith's first visit, had learned how unwelcome Americans were in California. They had gained the impression that they must massacre any more men from the "States" attempting to come that way. It was therefore a treacherous welcome they gave to Smith and his men. The visitors had no thought of evil as they turned their animals loose upon the grazing fields of the Mohaves. As before, the Indians traded with the men beaver, pumpkins, wheat, and corn.

But when the party divided with Smith and some of its leaders started across the river on a raft, men still on the south shore were horribly butchered. Ten Americans fell in this massacre.

Fortunately the words of Jedediah Smith, describing the tragedy, have been preserved for us by Peter Skene Ogden.

"My horses were speedily secured and driven off out of sight," Smith later reported to Ogden; "and it is scarcely necessary to say that any attempt at pursuit under the circumstances had been in vain.

"Such was the situation in which I found myself with property to the value of \$10,000. Rather than that the villains who had so deeply injured me should reap any benefit from it, I had the whole thrown in the river." Thus the Colorado received its tribute to Indian treachery just as the Snake had in the days of Stuart.

"We then made a raft and crossed over, where we found the bodies of my unfortunate men so mutilated as to be hardly recognizable," Smith continued. "We consigned

them also to the keeping of the deep, for as you know not even the dead are respected by the wild tribes of these parts."

The American mountaineers did not forget this massacre. In honor of Thomas Virgin, one of Smith's men who fell seriously wounded, the river down which they had come to the Colorado they named the Virgin River. And they held in their hearts with the memory of their murdered companions a determination one day to even up this score.

Smith now proceeded, beggared and on foot, to the same Mexican settlement where he had found a reluctant welcome the year before. But the Mexicans had been thinking during this year, and feared that more Americans would come over Smith's trail.

They suavely told the American leader they could now do nothing for him. He must see the Governor, José María de Echendia. The Honorable José María had moved his capital northward as a compliment to the discontented Californians of Monterey. To Monterey, then, the stricken Americans must make their way.

Smith had with him Thomas Virgin. He could not take the wounded man along. At San Gabriel he had seen aged Indians stripped and given fourteen lashes each across the back, but he could not think similarly brutal treatment would be meted out to Americans. So, leaving Virgin to the care of the Spaniards, he plunged into the wilderness lying between Los Angeles and the City of Monterey.

He had not gone far when friendly Indians told him that Thomas Virgin, despite his wounds, had been hustled away to San Diego, and was languishing in a foul dungeon. Smith wrote letters back appealing to them to release his wounded friend and send him on to join the main party, if they would not care for him through convalescence.

Before the American leader searched out Governor Echandia, he went to the secret rendezvous in the Sierras where his own men were waiting for them. He found them in a destitute condition — almost as badly off as himself. And they had an evil tale to tell of Spaniards who had interfered to make their lot hard.

It appeared that even before the stout-hearted Jedediah had gone on his trying journey to the Great Salt Lake, Padre Duran of the Mission of San José had accused the Americans of enticing his Indian neophytes to desert. The charge was disproved, but the Commandant at San Francisco ordered Smith taken into custody. The officers who came to take him found that several days before he had gone on across the forbidding peaks of the Sierras

where the snow still lay in drifts, often to the tree tops. The Spanish officers had no heart to follow, and lost interest in the few miserable survivors who remained in the mountains.

Smith now struck overland for San José, hoping to receive a permit from the priests to continue on to Monterey, to visit the Governor. His fate this time was to encounter Mexican policy in all its

more cruel manifestations. He arrived at the Mission San José in a three days' journey, but instead of receiving



him, the commandant had him conveyed to a dirty cell in a guard house. His horses were seized and taken away. He was not allowed to write to the Governor but was told to write the commander of the Upper Province, whose headquarters were at San Francisco. Nobody thought of offering the American intruder any food. He languished thus in prison for three days, when he was informed he would be put on trial.

"On what charge?" he demanded in dismay, for here was a man of conscience, who felt that he had done no wrong.

"On the charge of intruding on the rights of California by entering it," a lieutenant of the Mexican army answered.

Whatever feelings Smith had like those carried into action by the mountaineers when they tried this charge out by raising the Bear Flag in 1846, he concealed within his own heart. He was acting alone nineteen years ahead of the day of American strength and power in the land of the Spanish Californias. Smith merely protested that he was far from home and had been forced upon the hospitality of the Mexicans by dire necessity. He pleaded for a chance to see the Governor.

Polite, ever, no matter what his plan of conduct, the Spanish Governor sent a friendly note inviting the American to visit him in Monterey. The friendly invitation found Smith in prison. He showed it to the authorities, and asked for his arms, for the three-day journey overland.

He was not favored thus, despite the politeness of the Governor's note. Instead he was furnished four soldiers, who, it was soon found, were not an escort for him, but his guards. They took him not to the Governor's "casa," but "to the calaboose without refreshment."

While still famished, and in jail, the next day at 11 o'clock our intrepid American received word that the Mexican Governor was ready to receive him. He appeared before the Spanish grandee ragged and forlorn, but presaging a power the Spaniard had no way of estimating.

Ship captains from Boston interfered now, as they had in San Diego the year before. They were Americans, and recognized their brother in distress. The Honorable José María would be quite sure one day that Smith and his detested Americans should be shipped horseback to Mexico. Next day he felt sure they must be sent away by ship. Stout-hearted old Captain Cooper — John Rogers Cooper of Boston — finally forced matters to a conclusion. He appointed himself, with the support of half a dozen other ship captains, agent of the United States. And as such agent he gave a bond as to Smith's character, and for his good conduct.

And Smith signed a bond, to guarantee his own banishment.

It was a document the mountaineers never forgave the Mexicans for exacting. It read:

I, Jedediah S. Smith, of Green Township in the State of Ohio, do hereby bind myself, my heirs, executors and principals in the sum of thirty-thousand dollars for the faithful performance of a certain bond, given to the Mexican Government, dated at Monterey, 15 November 1827.

Witness: RUFUS PERKINS

With one copy of his order of banishment in his hand, Smith was told he was free. He might get back to his own people as best he could. He was allowed the privilege of purchasing articles and horses of which he stood in need.

He also found out for a certainty that the Mohave Indians who had massacred his men, had acted on instruc-

tions from the headquarters of the Mexican government. This information was given with a hint he had better not come back again.

Smith asked permission to enlist fifteen more men who were willing to join his force. It was refused him.

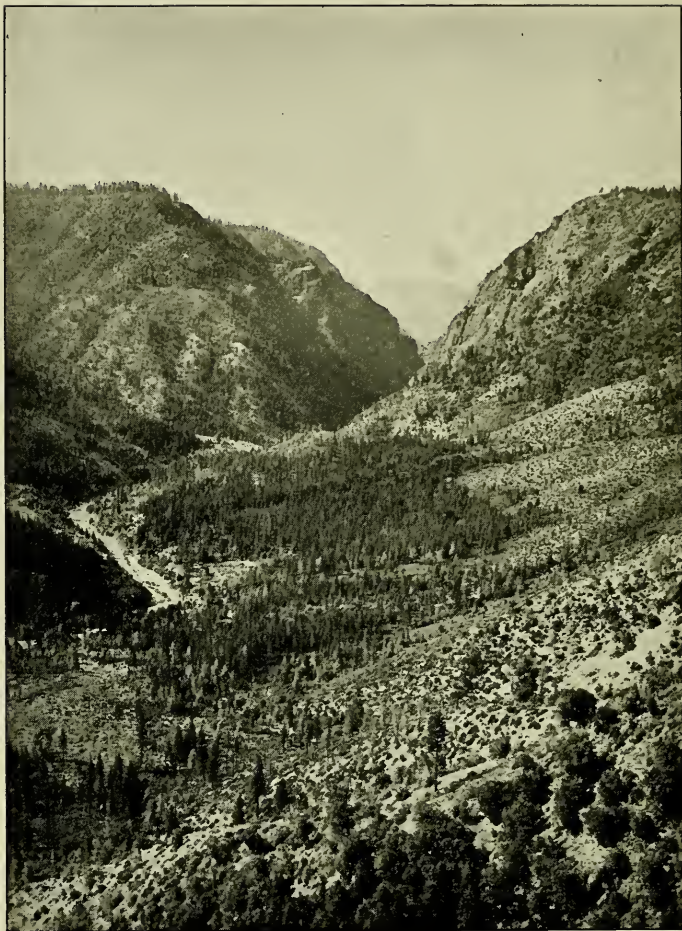
He now moved up from San Francisco to a branch of the Sacramento flowing in from the East. But it was at flood water and he could not pass. While waiting for the waters to subside he was taught something of that curious California institution, the "rainy season." These warm rains, blowing in on the Chinook winds from the Pacific, deluged the country for weeks and months at a time.

The river continued impassably high. Perhaps Smith did not care to cross by the bull-boat method. It was the spring trapping season and the trapping was good; he might at least do a little to mend his broken fortunes while he waited.

Spies constantly reported to the Mexican Governor Smith's whereabouts as he lingered. They referred to the river where he was encamped as "El rio de los Americanos." That was good Spanish for "the river of the Americans." It is still called the American River. Smith moved slowly up this river as he passed the winter, getting farther and farther away from Spanish "hospitality."

Finding all the mountain passes leading eastward impossible to cross, these first overland Americans into California finally struck out northward up the main valley of the Sacramento. They hoped to find a way back into their own country around the north end of the Sierras, just as they had gained entrance to the Spanish country by going around the south end of this majestic range. It was April 13, 1828, when they started for Oregon, as a way out of California.

Hardly less significant than the fate of Jedediah Smith



Southern Pacific R. R.

American River Canyon, named after Smith's band of Americans.

in California was the fate of another American whose dying words in a foul San Diego prison cell were written in his own life blood upon a piece of cardboard torn from the lining of his cap. The message was a dying plea to see his son.

This fine American was Sylvester Q. Pattie, a pioneer of Kentucky and a veteran of the War of 1812. Pattie, with his son James and a few friends, reached California by boat, down the Colorado River in 1827. They deserve place among our most daring trail blazers, being among the first to press into the wilds of the Farther West and South West from Kentucky.

Father and son reached Santa Fe in their overland wanderings. There the father heard of the Santa Rita copper mine. He found it had been abandoned and went out from Santa Fe to work it. Meanwhile his son, after many adventures and a romantic love affair with a Spanish hidalgo's daughter, made a trapping journey in company with Navajo Indians. They wandered up the Indian trails into the Utah country, crossed the Rockies, probably at the South Pass, and again doubled back for Santa Fe. Indian pillagers robbed them of their furs.

When the younger Pattie again met his father, things were not going well at the copper mine so both started on a fur-hunting expedition along the Gila. An Indian battle brought the venture to an unsuccessful end. The pillagers stole the party's horses and traps and furs. The Patties escaped by pushing down the river in a small boat. They could not work their way back toward their old Santa Fe associates.

Out through the mouth of the Gila they went on to the Colorado. They had heard of the Spanish settlements in California and decided to seek refuge and succor from the Governor there.



A portion of the petrified forest in the Arizona desert, through which the Patties journeyed in their wanderings from Sante Fe to California.

Down the broad Colorado they made their way. None in the party had ever seen an ocean tide before. Tide-rips were utterly unknown to them. Therefore, when the incoming tide met the waters of the Colorado and churned them into fury, all aboard the frail little craft were thrown into a panic. Indians on shore frantically motioned to them to make shore before they sank.

They managed to land on the river bank, but pitched camp so that the incoming tide soon flooded them out, and they fled further inland with a good deal of dismay. They buried the furs they had managed to accumulate on their journey down the river; but as they were still ignorant of the ways of the sea, the flood tide later poured in upon the skins and ruined them.

While working northward the Patties at last reached a

mission, some miles south of San Diego. The welcome they got when at last they encountered white men was to be arrested as suspicious foreigners. Starved and ragged as they were, and possessed of credentials from the Governor of Santa Fe, they hardly expected this treatment. Concluding that as soon as they met some officer in real authority in San Diego all would be well, they allowed themselves to be led to prison cells. Under escort of armed guards they were taken to San Diego and again imprisoned. James Pattie pleaded to be allowed to occupy a prison cell with his father, but this he was denied. The Americans were wrongly accused of being spies and without fair hearing treated as such.

Month after month passed in this miserable way. Young Pattie grieved much over the enforced separation from his father, for they had always been companions. A young girl, the sister of a sergeant who often stood on guard at the prison, became friendly with James Pattie and learned that he was the older man's son. She carried messages to and fro, and at last she brought the message which notified James that his father was dying. Through the lad's pleading she was induced to carry the plea for a meeting between father and son to Governor Echandia. The plea was denied.

When James was at last led forth from his cell it was to stand beside an open grave. His keepers asked him, casually, what were the burial customs of his country. His eyes ached so in their unaccustomed contact with the sun after so many months in a dark, reeking, prison cell, that he could hardly make out the contour of his father's face as the coffin was brought to the grave's edge. After his father had been buried, he was led back again to his prison cell. The sergeant's sister walked beside him all the way and held his hand. It was all the comfort she could

give to one so far away from his own land and his own people.

Young James was not destined to remain in prison much longer. Among the effects taken from his father was a box marked "smallpox vaccine." A smallpox epidemic had broken out in California and the Mexican Commander asked James if he could vaccinate its possible victims. James asserted that he could. They released him and sent him on a tour of the state with a vaccine needle and his box of vaccine. Thus equipped he made a journey north to Monterey, helping unfortunate sufferers.

He departed by ship for Mexico City to present his claims in the full faith that justice would be done to him. After meeting further rebuffs and failure on every hand, he at last made his way back to Ohio, where relatives of the family still lived. There in 1831 he published an account of his adventures. Added to the stories brought eastward by Jedediah Smith and his associates, Pattie's story played a large part in the final settling of accounts west of the High Sierras.



“He seized a firebrand and knocked down four assailants.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

MORE BORDER TREACHERY

FOR Smith and his Americans the northward march was to be a “march of death,” almost from its beginning. He was destined to end it as a ragged beggar at the door of Dr. McLoughlin, just as he had ended his experiment in California as a ragged suppliant at the feet of the Mexican Governor, Echandia.

This after nearly all his companions had been slain.

One of the heroes of this northward march, a New Englander by the name of Harrison G. Rogers, kept a diary up to the day before he was slain on the Umpqua along with twelve others of Smith’s men.

On May 22, 1828, in a prayerful mood which he always seemed to share with his great commander, he wrote: “O God, may it please Thee in Thy divine providence to still guide us and protect us through this wilderness of doubt and fear, as Thou hast done heretofore, and be with us in the hour of danger and difficulty as all praise is due to Thee

and not to man. O! Do not forsake us, Lord, but be with us and direct us through."

This little farewell prayer of a pathfinder fell into the hands of murderous Indians. It was recovered at last by British agents of the Hudson's Bay Company and was returned by them to Jedediah Smith. Through the precious document alone are we able to recover some of the details of the route of this disastrous march.

"Captain Smith generally goes ahead," wrote Rogers of his intrepid commander, "while I stay in the rear to see that things are kept in order."

With Smith "going ahead" to spy out the best route over mountains and across river valleys, the party kept moving northward. Its toilsome march was of two months' duration from the Sacramento to the Umpqua, a little stream rushing downward from the slopes of the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific.

On this journey Smith rose to his supreme heights as an explorer who could not be baffled by difficulties. If he lost horses and his men failed to find them, he struck out on the back trail himself and brought them to camp. If they all lost heart he struck off with his rifle and brought in game. If there was no road ahead that two men could travel, he was up before daylight to spy out some path along which to blaze a trail for all to follow.

It was his last exploring, for heartbreak and death now lay close ahead of him.

"The traveling is amazingly bad," wrote Rogers on May 14. "We descended one point of brushy and rocky mountain where it took us six hours to get the horses down, some of them falling about fifty feet perpendicular down a steep place into a creek. One broke his neck. A number of packs were left along the trail, as night was fast approaching and we were obliged to leave them and get what horses we could

collect at camp. A number more got badly hurt by the falls, but none was killed except this one that broke his neck."

Among the Americans was Thomas Virgin, the man wounded by the Mohaves the year before. One day Virgin and Rogers went hunting. Rogers saw a black bear, followed it, and fired. But he heard a second report immediately following the shot from his own rifle. At the same time he heard a cry from his companion. Hastening to his succor, he found that Virgin had been in a fight with Indians.

On the field lay one dead redskin, killed by the shot that had diverted Rogers's attention from the bear. In the side of Virgin's horse were three arrows, which had wounded the animal so sorely that he had lain down to die. The Indians had fled, for the dead man was their chief. But one faithful follower stood at his side. This was the chief's pet dog which would not abandon his master even in the face of enemies.

The two hunters got the wounded horse to his feet, led him to camp, and created a panic among Indian visitors by telling them of the battle and of the chief's death.

On the party now went through the fogs of the Pacific slope, until on May 28 they gained a fine view of the Pacific from the divide between the upper and lower Klamath. Supplies were gathered in various ways. They killed elk and deer occasionally. The Indians traded eels and fish with them for knives. Raspberries larger than the Americans had ever seen before were also brought in by the red men.

As Smith and his party went on into the region of the Hudson's Bay Company's influence, the natives acted with increasing hostility.

"When the Indians left camp," wrote Rogers on June 7,

*Southern Pacific R. R.*

In the Sacramento River Canyon, northern California.

“they stole a small kitten belonging to one of the men.” It was the company mascot, and had been brought along all the way from the Spanish settlements. These hostile acts began to thicken. A little later an Indian stole an ax, but the well trained Americans dug it up where he had buried it in the sand. One morning when the horses were driven in three were found with arrows in their hides. Two men, out to find lost horses, were pursued by a war party, armed with bows and arrows. All these things were the portents of the disaster soon to follow.

On July 7th a hundred Indians came to Smith’s camp. They gladdened the heart of our weary explorers, for they had many articles made by the white men. One had a “fusil” or gun such as the British traders furnished to

Indians. All had knives and tomahawks. One even wore a "blanket capote," the regulation cap and cape of a voyageur. Many of them had pieces of cloth such as Indians delighted to receive in exchange for beaver.

Two Indians who spoke "Chinook," or the traders' jargon, told the Americans they were only ten days away from the Indian villages on the Willamette. It seemed now that the hard journey was almost over. Succor and the companionship of Anglo-Saxons was the promise just ahead.

For a week the Americans traveled among the alluringly friendly Umpqua Indians, trading with them daily for fish and the large berries that are even yet famous in Oregon and Washington. They quarreled with one Indian who had stolen an ax and to frighten him into returning it put a rope around his neck.

The sunrise of Monday morning, July 14, was the last that most of the party were ever to behold. They were then only fifteen or twenty miles from the Willamette Valley. From there an open road led to the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters at Port Vancouver.

On the day before they had found the traveling very difficult, so Smith was up and off Monday morning before the camp was astir. He was out, as was his custom, to search for a better road.

After making his reconnaissance, the leader was returning when he saw the Indians executing a war dance. On catching sight of Smith, the savages yelled and rushed toward him. He dashed into the brush, and escaped. Later he stole back and had a glimpse of his pillaged camp and his brave murdered men. Then with one companion who also had escaped, the heartbroken American trail blazer took up the desolate way on toward the British headquarters.

*Southern Pacific R. R.*

Umpqua River, Oregon, on which the massacre of Smith's men occurred.

Once inside the stout gate of the Hudson's Bay Company fort Smith met Dr. John McLoughlin, a man who never let trade rivalry tempt him into mean actions. The white-haired lord of Rupert's Land gave Smith a fatherly welcome. After listening to the tragic tale, he sent out a force to recover Smith's property. The refugee was given comfortable quarters, good food, and new raiment.

His old friend Peter Skene Ogden — whom he had met some years before at the Flathead House — also came to greet Smith. All feelings of past rivalry were swept aside by the disaster. Here was a brother in trouble; it was no time to stir up animosities.

Ogden, in the days of the emigrants, when trappers were assailed as to their character, wrote a defense of the trappers and traders against their detractors. To illustrate what conditions the first explorers had to face, he

told the story of this massacre of Jedediah Smith's company just as he remembered it when Smith first told it to him.

"I was intimately acquainted with poor Smith," he wrote, "and it was from him that I learned the particulars of his misfortunes.

"It is proper to observe that myself as well as several of our gentlemen had on various occasions visited the village where the treason occurred, but we were at all times strictly on our guard. The natives, too, were sometimes in the habit of resorting to Vancouver to trade and were well acquainted with us.

"They soon, however, discovered poor Smith's party were strangers, and seem to have determined to take advantage of the misplaced confidence he seems to have reposed in their mild and peaceable disposition.

"Finding myself among Indians,' he says, 'whom from their possessing many articles of European merchandise and frequently mentioning you and several other gentlemen, I began to consider no longer as enemies, I relaxed my usual vigilance. . . .

"I then (on the fatal morning) embarked in a canoe and proceeded in search of a suitable crossing place, the banks opposite our encampment being too steep for our horses to surmount.

"On my return, after an absence of three hours, when within half a mile of the tents I observed a number of Indians running towards us along the banks, yelling most fearfully.

"Immediately suspecting what had happened, we crossed over and secreted ourselves in the bushes, the Indians discharging their guns at us without effect.

"Anxious to ascertain the fate of the party, I then ascended an eminence, from whence I could plainly per-

ceive the camp was destroyed, and not a vestige of man, horse, or mule was to be seen.

“‘Though conscious that the wretches would not dare to pursue us in a country so thickly wooded I yet considered it to be most prudent to be concealed by day and to travel only under cover of the night.

“‘On the second day we discovered some of the company’s servants who conducted us safely to Vancouver.’

“‘On the day preceding Mr. Smith’s arrival under these circumstances, one of the party named John Black, who had escaped the massacre at the camp, had also made his way to Fort Vancouver.”

The story told by Black, whose first name was Arthur and not John as Ogden recorded it, was that soon after Mr. Smith’s departure the men were busy cleaning their rifles and doing camp chores when the Indians raised a war whoop all around them.

They charged unto the little group before any defensive organization could be effected, and hacked down the defenseless Americans right and left.

Black had just finished cleaning and had loaded his rifle, when three Indians leaped on him. He shook them off, and seeing all his comrades down, with Indians stabbing them, he fired into those nearest him and rushed for the woods. He was hotly pursued but escaped.

John Turner, who made his way to Fort Vancouver with Smith, escaped because of his enormous size and strength. He was camp cook that morning and when the Indians attacked him he seized a firebrand and knocked down, if he did not actually kill, four assailants. He then rushed to warn his commander, whom he met returning to camp.

Good-hearted Dr. McLoughlin not only recovered Smith’s horses, mules, and furs but gave Smith a draft for their value on London. It was a draft for \$20,000.

There was then no way out of the Columbia country until a Hudson's Bay brigade should be made up in the spring. Smith spent the winter there as Dr. McLoughlin's guest, and also the guest of Sir George Simpson, Governor of all of Rupert's Land.

Bidding good-by to his hosts in the spring, the stranded American with one companion made his way to Kettle Falls. Thence via Fort Caldwell and Flathead House he trailed back to the Snake River rendezvous.

A legend clung on in the Umpqua country for many years after this massacre. It was that from Smith's papers the Indians took a map which showed them the course of the Sierras running south and the Great Salt Lake, with rivers running into it and none at all running out. Professor Schoolcraft, the great Indian historian, heard this legend a score of years later from the lips of the Indians themselves.

There was another Indian legend about the massacre. It was that a giant slave Indian, who was owned by a Hudson's Bay Company employee, came to the Indians the night before the massacre and worked them up to perpetrate it by explaining that these whites were foes of the Columbia River whites, and so must be killed.

The passions stirred up between the rival trading parties by tales based on this massacre rose to white heat. As long as the question whether Oregon should be British or American was still undecided, the feelings on both sides were aflame. The hot anger subsided only when the leaders on both sides went to their graves in the valleys of the mighty River of the West.

Today Dr. McLoughlin and Peter Skene Ogden sleep beneath the Stars and Stripes, along with many of those most bitterly against them until the issue whose flag should fly in Oregon was finally put to rest.



“‘It was a novel sight to see the trappers arrive with dogs and sleds.’”

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

STIRRING THE EMBERS OF '76

A FAITHFUL watcher for his friend was David Jackson. In the spring of 1829 he built his signal fire high on the Teton range. Jackson had come to await the arrival of Jedediah Smith, who had promised to come this way before the summer of his second year as an explorer of California.

While Jackson waited on the shore of Jackson's Lake, Jedediah Smith was coming with a single companion down the British trail from Flathead House. The Iroquois Indians of the Hudson's Bay Company had been afraid to travel this dangerous trail alone; while Alexander Ross himself was glad of large reinforcements from Americans when he had attempted to follow it.

In the simple statement that Smith and his companion arrived at last in Pierre's Hole, just over the mountains from the valley where Jackson awaited him, lies a wealth of romance. It was a journey only the most steel-hearted of mountaineers could have accomplished. And on the

way Smith had tarried to teach the Nez Percé Indians the religion of the Christians, for his Bible as always he had kept with him through massacres and misfortunes.

One day a lad named Joe Meek, out on a scout from the camp in Jackson's Hole, sighted Smith and his companion, Black. Young Meek rushed back the message that the missing Jedediah had been found. Soon large detachments of the forces of the firm of Smith, Jackson, and Sublette were hurrying for Pierre's Hole. Already that year they had held a general rendezvous on the Popo Agie River near the eastern outlet of the South Pass. But Smith would have important reports to make and plans to suggest, and the other leaders would have things to tell that this leader should hear.

Smith, of course, had the most melancholy tale to relate. Only one of all his brave men was left of the two gala parties with which he had set off for the Spanish country.

When he came to the feature of his reception at the hands of Dr. McLoughlin, there was something his stern New England conscience made him say in which his partners could not concur. This was that the fine-souled, paternal Dr. McLoughlin had won from him through kindness a promise he could never have extorted through force. The promise was that so far as he was concerned he would respect the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company to all territory west of the Rocky Mountains. Smith therefore proposed, as commander of the Americans, that they retreat out of the Far West that he had done so much to explore, and confine their trapping to the Missouri River watershed.

Smith's partner, William G. Sublette, had a proposition of quite a different character. It was that they break in the Platte horse trail, over which he had gone many times with furs to St. Louis and with supplies from St.

Louis to the mountains, as a wagon road. He outlined the ease with which wagons could be brought on and proposed that at the next rendezvous the firm be represented by a Rocky Mountain wagon trail. Sublette was in no mood to yield an inch of territory to the British.

This determination was strengthened by the story Samuel Tullock, a veteran mountaineer of the Ashley group, had to tell. It dealt, again, with old Peter Skene Ogden and his men and showed how subtle and set was the determination of the Hudson's Bay Company to have this Snake River and Great Basin country for themselves.

Tullock told of leading a group of trappers into the valleys of the Weiser, Payette, Portneuf and other tributaries of the Snake. There they had fallen in with Ogden, or "M'sieu Pete," as his devoted Canadians called him. They found they were the second detachment of Americans to encounter the Hudson's Bay leader that year, and that feeling was not of the most cordial nature in that part of the Far West.

The first detachment, Tullock reported, was led by a trapper named Johnson. Johnson had very frankly told Ogden that he was to be followed by Americans everywhere he went — clear back to the Columbia if necessary. It was the old-time spirit of '76 flaming out again beyond the Rockies. Ogden's father had felt it for he had fled from New Jersey to Canada as a Loyalist in Revolutionary days.

The snow was very deep in the mountain passes leading toward the American camp at the Great Salt Lake when Tullock sought Ogden's companionship on Christmas Eve of 1827. The natural hardships of the season were made harder by M'sieu Pete's influence over the Indians.

Tullock and his men must have snowshoes to get through the northern rim of the Great Basin. The Indians refused

*Union Pacific System*

Jackson's Lake, named after David Jackson, one of the great trappers of the West.

to sell them or make them, even when offered \$25 a pair! It was unusual Indian conduct, and Tullock suspected Ogden; but he held his peace until he was safe in the rendezvous of his own friends. Then he told the whole tale with such force that Jedediah Smith sent it on to Ashley in St. Louis, who in turn sent it along to Missouri's Senator Benton in Washington.

The grievance of Smith's mountain heroes against their British brothers now came officially before the Government of the United States.

We now know that Tullock's suspicions of Ogden were well founded. Agnes Laut, an author of note, has recovered from the Hudson's Bay Company house in London the diary of "M'sieu Pete" for this period.

"The chief of the Snakes carries an American flag," Ogden wrote in despair at his first encounter with Americans. He saw the beginning of the new era in the Rockies.

"My sanguine hopes of beaver are blasted," he lamented, "I am camped with the Americans. Their trappers are everywhere!"

Ogden paid this tribute to American spirit:

"For three years General Ashley has brought supplies to this country from St. Louis and in that time has cleared \$80,000 and retired, selling his goods at an advance of 150 per cent payable in five years in beaver at \$5 per beaver. Three young men, Smith, Jackson, and Sublette bought the goods and the first year cleared \$20,000.

"Finding themselves alone they sold their goods to the Indians at one-third dearer than Ashley did.

"What a contrast to myself! They will be rich in a few years."

Ogden and all his canny Scotch brothers had an old motto with Scotch words which was the working basis of Hudson's Bay Company procedure.

It was "to always keep a little to yourself which you will not tell to any!"

The little that Ogden kept to himself, not telling it to any, he confided to his diary concerning those snowshoes for the Americans. Laid bare now after many years, it reveals the Hudson's Bay method of diplomacy in the strange Far Western Indian lands.

"Tullock, the American who failed to get through the snow to Salt Lake," he wrote, "tried to engage an Indian to carry letters to the American camp. This I cannot prevent. *I cannot bribe all the Indians*, but I have succeeded in keeping them from making snowshoes for the Americans.

"The Americans are very low spirited. They cannot hire a messenger or purchase snowshoes, nor do they suspect that I prevent it. This day he offered eight beaver and \$50 for a pair, and a prime horse to any one who

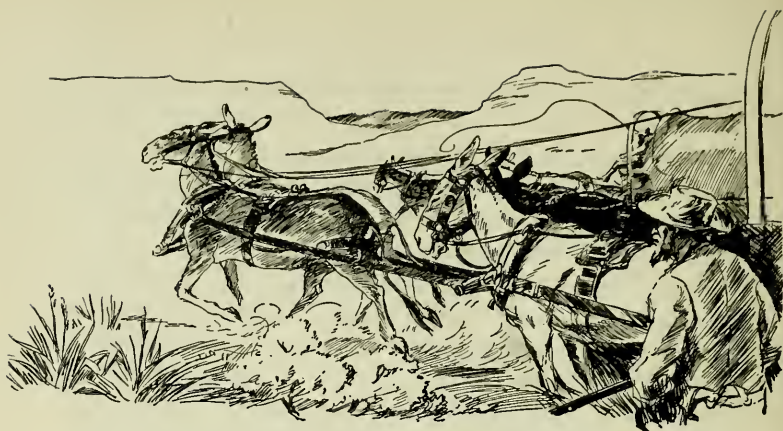
would carry a letter to the American camp. In this he also failed."

Three times the Americans set out for their rendezvous south of Salt Lake, only to be driven back each time by storms. Ogden, noting these misfortunes, chuckled to himself: "It is laughable, so many attempts and no success. They have only twenty-four horses left. The rest of fifty they brought are dead from cold. I have small hope that our own horses can escape but I can cover them with robes each night."

As Tullock, in the shadows of the grand Tetons, told his version of this adventure to Smith, Jackson, and Sublette, he added a thrilling detail. This was that where Americans could not go with horses they went with dog sleds. Tullock was rescued from his isolation at Ogden's camp on February 16, by the arrival of a dog train from the American headquarters on Green River.

And Ogden's version of this dog sled journey was as unique as his other confidences to his faithful diary. "It was a novel sight to see trappers arrive with dogs and sleds in this part of the world; for usually not two inches of snow are to be found here. They brought the old story of course, that the Hudson's Bay Company was soon to quit the Columbia. At all events the treaty of joint occupation does not expire till November.

"The Americans leave for the Kootenay Country of the North. We separate on the best of terms. They told me their traders from St. Louis failed to arrive last fall owing to severe weather and their camp south of Salt Lake had been attacked by Blackfeet, and Pierre, my old Iroquois, was cut to pieces."



"Captain Sublette rolled into the rendezvous at the head of a train of ten wagons."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

ROLLING OUT OF THE ROCKIES

IF the stern New England conscience of Jedediah Smith would not let him continue in the trapping country claimed by the British after their kindness to him at Fort Vancouver, where then could Americans look for peltries?

Smith and his companions talked the problem over as they took stock of affairs at that rendezvous of 1829 in Pierre's Hole. There was the Blackfoot country, they agreed — the country the explorers, Lewis and Clark, had passed through and described as being gloomy and forbidding, full of dangers.

For the most part it was still an untrapped region. The Blackfeet had maintained till now the mastery over it. But Smith decided he would lead his forces thither, Blackfeet or no Blackfeet.

Captain Sublette was to go along to the other side of the Rockies. Once there he was to proceed to St. Louis and

carry out his plan to return to the mountains the next season with a wagon train.

The chill October winds were blowing when Smith and his reluctant followers headed northeastward out of Pierre's Hole for the headwaters of the Missouri. It was a desolate winter journey, as were many of Smith's journeys. He never seemed to be able to make peace with the conditions around him.

The trappers, many of them nearly frozen to death, reached the North Pass at Missouri Lake, the source of the Madison fork, in November. They pushed on across the Gallatin fork, to a lofty divide separating that stream from the Yellowstone.

On this march the Blackfeet gave many a young recruit a taste of the tragic perils of mountaineering, and the veterans also had ample opportunity to test their daring.

One morning a Blackfoot stampede occurred. Captain Sublette leaped on a horse and risked his life in a dash around the herd of horses, trying to turn the stampede back upon the American camp. Two of his horses fell from Blackfeet shots; but after each fatal shot, he was quickly upon a fresh animal, and he saved almost every horse. Then for six hours he led his men in a running fight that gave the horse thieves the whipping of their lives. In a ravine he cornered and nearly exterminated them.

The mountaineers all had a chance for one great laugh before a real mountain tragedy overtook them. Joe Meek, Craig, and Nelson, three of the party, were near camp one day when a grizzly bear charged upon them. All ran for trees, but Nelson climbed a tree near which two others grew.

The grizzly decided he could climb, too; so, bracing his back against one of the near-by trees, the animal worked its way up to within a few feet of where Nelson was hanging.



“The grizzly decided he could climb too.”

But just as he was reaching for his prey, the tender branches bent and Mr. Bruin fell with a resounding thud to the ground. Twice more he climbed in the same way, only to be dropped back with a bang, before he gave up in disgust and strolled away.

The story, told in camp, put everybody in a rollicking mood. But such moods were brief in the mountains. A Blackfoot band pounced down upon them one morning with the suddenness of a hurricane. Men were cut off from their camp equipage, two were shot dead, and the others scattered in a general scramble for safer places.

Young Joe Meek found himself, a mere lad of twenty, alone on a lofty mountain. He had only his mule, his blanket, and his gun, and there was nothing around him but solitude. That night was the most miserable he ever spent in his life, he confided to Mrs. Victor, his biographer, many years later when he was an aged hero, respected and renowned throughout Oregon.

Tenderfoot that he was Joe still knew enough to ride

for his life out of the Blackfoot neighborhood. He rode thirty miles before dawn, then abandoned his mule, and kept on to the southward. He killed a mountain sheep and feasted upon its flesh. For four days he traveled thus alone, while the others of the party were making their way to a branch of the Big Horn, known as the Stinking Water fork, from its sulphurous odors.

Then the young adventurer looked over a mountainous ledge — and saw a spectacle evil enough to make the most sane wanderer doubt his sanity.

Springs boiled and shot up columns of water and steam. Burning gases shot out of craters, while blue flames of burning brimstone hovered over crevices. The earth under him, as he approached the strange scene, gave out a hollow sound. He was sure now he had passed beyond the earth into the lower regions. He did not know he was discovering a most remarkable section of what is now the famous Yellowstone National Park.

His final conclusion was that it was pleasanter to find such a warm place to sleep than to have to try to rest on the bleak mountains over which he had come.

But young Joe was not destined to sleep there long. A banging rifle and Indian whoops made him think his last day had come. He prepared to fight for his life — only to find companions out in search for him. They led him to the main camp on the Big Horn where Jedediah Smith had joined his band with another detachment of trappers under Milton G. Sublette, a younger brother of the famous Captain William.

They heard Meek's story and addressed him lovingly as "Old Uncle Joe." Youngster that he was, the term fell joyfully upon his ears, for it was the way mountaineers had of welcoming the tenderfoot into their heart of hearts. It was always "Old Joe" after that as long as he lived.

In Smith's tent there dwelt beside the great leader a young negro slave boy. While all were starving, the negro boy captured a porcupine. He was broiling it on a fire at night and while his back was turned Meek did what he always remembered as the meanest act of his life. He disappeared in the darkness — with the dainty mountain meal!

Afterward he heard this negro boy lament the loss of that little porcupine so long and loudly that he was overjoyed when he found that the pious Jedediah had given the colored lad his freedom from slavery and had presented him in addition with \$200!

How hard that winter's journey was may be imagined from the plain statement of the leader that they lost 100 head of horses. These sank to their death in drifts of soft snow!

Sublette now left the camp for the purpose of carrying out his intention to bring wagons to the Rockies. He started for St. Louis in company with the veteran "Black" Harris. They went on snowshoes, driving before them a train of dog sleds, determined to reach St. Louis by this means long before traveling on horses would become practicable.

Smith moved his men down to the Powder River. Game here was abundant so that they had a season of plenty.

But Smith could not remain quiet in camp. He organized a force to assault the Blackfeet in their strongest lairs. It seemed almost as if this intrepid leader had been set apart by Fate to do the hardest work of breaking in this country for America.

At the first touch of spring Smith and his men moved northward to the Rosebud, where in later years the Sioux were to fight some of their most desperate battles against the whites. On Bovey's fork Smith and his men misjudged

the current and started their horses across. Thirty were swept away, carrying 300 traps with them. It was an irreparable loss.

While they were digging holes for a cache in a steep bank, the bank caved in, killing one man instantly and burying Joe Meek so that he was more dead than alive when his companions dug him out. He then saw them roll his dead companion in a blanket and toss him into the turbulent river. It seemed a harsh way of disposing of the dead, but he was enough of a mountaineer by now to know this was better than to have the Indians disinter and scalp their companion or to have the wolves dig up and devour his remains.

Smith now moved on to the Musselshell and the Judith Basin after crossing the main stream of the Yellowstone. Traps were stolen every night. Spies brought in reports of a large Blackfoot village near at hand. For several weeks the men worked at high tension. Then they cheered as Smith gave the order to retreat toward the Wind River rendezvous, where Captain Sublette was due in July with his wagons from St. Louis.

While Smith was thus occupied, David Jackson set out for Jackson's Hole and the Weber River country. From this country he returned to the Wind River rendezvous with a large catch of furs, just in time to meet Smith and his men returning from the Rosebud and the Yellowstone with a still larger catch. Together the united parties, wealthier than any mountain men had ever been before, awaited the coming of the wagons!

And, true to his promise, on July 16 Captain Sublette rolled into rendezvous at the head of a train of ten wagons, each one of which was drawn by five mules.

He had more than made good his pledges to bring wagons to the Rockies. He had brought two Dearborn buggies in

addition to the wagons, each one of which was drawn by a single mule. And to give his old friends a taste of home life again he had brought twelve head of cattle and a milch cow!

Captain Sublette reported that he had made the journey from St. Louis in three months and six days without any trouble or delay. It was the advent of wagons on the Oregon Trail.

Soon the whole country learned that not only had wagons been taken across to the Rockies, but they could easily have been taken far beyond, had the Americans so desired.

The ten wagons loaded with freight proved a rich boon to the mountaineers, who saw in them a guarantee of plenty of supplies. And the wagons could take back to St. Louis as precious a burden as ever ten wagons carried over the old Platte River trail. There was a rich load of furs as their battling burden of wealth.

The joyous rendezvous lasted for three weeks. For there was horse racing, card games, dancing, and shooting at a mark for wagers to while away the time.

Finally on August 4 the faithful partners, Smith, Jackson, and Sublette, announced that they were through with the mountains for the present. They had decided to roll out of the Rockies with the wagon train — and leave the perils of mountaineering to others.

Purchasers stepped forward eagerly for the supplies and the firm's prerogatives. Thomas Fitzpatrick, the best Indian fighter then in the mountains, was first to buy a share. Then Milton Sublette, Captain William's younger brother, bought a share. Young Jim Bridger, just coming to the fore as a guide to the Blackfoot country, joined the new firm, as did also Henry Fraeb and Baptiste Gervais. These were the stanchest of this second generation of mountaineers.

They gave their joint note, on behalf of the new Rocky Mountain Fur Company, to the old partners. It was made for \$16,000 payable June 15, 1831, in beaver at \$4.25 per pound.

That same day with 190 packs of beaver the retiring partners started for "the states." They left behind the buggies but took all the wagons, four of the cattle, and the milch cow. Thus Jedediah Smith rolled out of the Rockies forever, after his six fateful years of exploring, fighting, and struggling for a fortune. He had succeeded in gathering wealth; but, more valuable still, he had during these years of brave struggling solved for the nation and the world most of the secrets of the land where the sunlight glinted across the face of the Great Salt Lake.





“As they watched, a solitary horseman appeared.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE PASSING OF A DAUNTLESS EXPLORER

WHEN Jedediah Smith led the way for himself and his companions out of the Rockies, where their moccasined feet were to tread no more, the arrangement with the new mountain leaders was that Fitzpatrick, known to the Indians as "Bad Hand," should follow them down for the next season's outfit of goods.

After another season of exciting experiences, Fitzpatrick started with one man for St. Louis on a lonely winter journey. He was to come back in the summer with a great load of supplies, which the old partners, Smith, Jackson, and Sublette, were supposed to be preparing for the new mountaineering firm. But Fitzpatrick did not come back with the summer winds, as was suspected.

The rendezvous was held. Fraeb and Gervais came up out of Colorado; Bridger and Sublette came out of the Wasatch country; and free trappers gathered in from all directions. But the Wind River mountains echoed to no rumbling of wagon wheels from St. Louis. The summer passed and still Fitzpatrick did not come. The rendezvous broke up in sullen anger, each trapper feeling out of sorts.

They put watchers out on the road to St. Louis, but gained no trace of the missing man.

At last, as the fall snow flurries were beginning to fly and the mountaineers were settling down in their grand camp on Powder River, the scouts rushed in to herald the news that Fitzpatrick had been sighted. He was coming by the Laramie Trail, then known as the Fort William Trail, up from Santa Fe, and via the Platte to the Wind River rendezvous.

But why from Santa Fe?

Fitzpatrick soon told the partners once they were assembled in winter quarters.

Jedediah Smith — their strong, loyal, religious friend and former leader — was no more.

An Indian arrow or an Indian spear had laid him low in the sandy bottom of the Cimarron, one of the three branches which unite to form the Arkansas before it rolls in a flood into the mighty Mississippi.

All that Fitzpatrick knew for a certainty, was that he had reached St. Louis just as the old partners were setting out for Santa Fe. They had been the heroes of the Missouri River metropolis since their arrival from the Rockies with an astounding wealth of furs.

Fitzpatrick joined their Santa Fe expedition of eighty-five men, equipped with twenty-three wagons, and one field piece mounted on the rear wheels of a wagon. He joined, he explained, with a view of coming up to the rendezvous from Santa Fe, the thriving New Mexican capital, instead of from St. Louis direct.

There had been an old trail from Missouri to Santa Fe, opening simultaneously with the trail to the Rockies. It was a trail for wagons and bands of mules and horses, which were brought by way of Santa Fe from California to Independence, Missouri. Thus California, long before its conquest by Americans, was contributing to Missouri the hardy mule that did so much to make Missouri famous.

Fitzpatrick confided that they hardly considered the Santa Fe Trail dangerous, as pack trains had crossed at intervals since 1806 and in 1821 a wagon had been taken by William Becknell from Franklin, Missouri, to the Mexican capital. And after that wagon trains had been quite usual, James O. Pattie and Joseph Robidoux going out in 1824.

The expedition which included Smith, Jackson, and Wil-

liam Sublette, Fitzpatrick explained, got along all right until it crossed the Arkansas, and faced the sixty-five-mile march to the forks of the Cimarron.

The march at best was over dry deserts, burning with heat. But on this occasion its worst character had to be faced. A southern windstorm came up, hot, suffocating, and dry enough to parch the life out of both mules and men.

Jedediah Smith always felt the call to action in such a situation. Once by going ahead, as he always did, to find a way across the Colorado for his men he had been saved from massacre when the rear of his camp was attacked. Again on the Umpqua he had gone ahead to find a road, and had been saved. But now as he rode ahead with his friend Fitzpatrick, it proved a ride to his death.

In a branch of the Cimarron they found a dry, sandy bottom. Smith told his friend Fitzpatrick to remain there and he would prospect upstream for water holes. If none were found, he would press on to the main river.

Fitzpatrick watched his old leader through a glass until he was three miles away. This was the last that any white man ever saw of Jedediah Strong Smith. When the fine old mountaineer disappeared over a sandy ridge he dropped from the sight of all his kind.

The traders, who included Peter and Austin Smith, younger brothers of Jedediah, could get no further account of the veteran leader until some time later. It seemed as if the desert had swallowed this man that had so often defied it.

The next news came from Santa Fe. Soon after the expedition rolled into that city on July 4, 1831, an Indian trader brought in a percussion gun and two percussion revolvers. They were a new style of firearms, with which Jedediah had equipped himself. His brothers quickly recognized them.

The trader told a story that Fitzpatrick carried on to the mountains to Smith's old friends. It is the only account ever gained of this brave man's death. He had it from a party of Arapahoe Indians he found in possession of these arms. The Indians had been anxious to sell the weapons because they did not understand the percussion feature.

The Indian trader said that the Indians told of lying in wait on the Cimarron for buffaloes, which they expected to come to the river for water. As they watched, a solitary horseman appeared, white with desert dust, and nearly famished. They let him ride over the river's bank, down into the bed of the stream. They watched while he first let his horse drink, then slaked his own thirst.

Then, while the man and his horse stood together at the water hole, they raised a war whoop, and rushed from ambush. It seemed to be merely a sporting adventure of Indians waiting for buffalo. At the first rush Smith whipped out a pistol and fired. He killed the chief of the Arapahoes as he led the attack.

So much the Indians themselves told. They added that they dispatched Smith with their Spanish spears, thrusting him through three times. They looted his belongings. What they did with the body they never told. No one ever found the last resting-place of this noble leader. The wild places had absorbed him.

In St. Louis the passing of this dauntless soul was hardly noticed. Only one friend, who had gleaned a vision of the importance of Smith's explorations, made a gesture toward the coming generations and the day when Smith would find his rightful place in history. He wrote an eulogy on his departed friend. It appeared in the *Illinois Magazine* for June, 1832. Who this friend was is now unknown, but his predictions as to Smith's greatness are just coming into fulfillment. Out of the dust of the era of Western settle-



A trapper's map of the Great West, based on data furnished by Jedediah Smith's first explorations of the Great Basin, drawn by Burr in 1839. Note that most of the errors on the previous maps regarding this region have been eliminated. The Humboldt River, however, is not correctly shown on this map.

ment, which for a time obscured all that went before, Jedediah Strong Smith now begins to rise brilliantly as one of America's greatest men.

Why did this brave leader spend those brilliantly disastrous years in the mountains?

He has given us his own view in a letter from Wind River to a beloved brother, Ralph, dated December 24, 1829:

It is that I may be able to help those who stand in need, that I face every danger. It is for this that I travel the mountains covered with eternal snow. It is for this that I pass over the sandy plains, in heat of summer, thirsting for water where I may cool my overheated body. It is for this that I go for days without eating and am pretty well satisfied if I can gather a few roots, or better, satisfied if we can afford ourselves a piece of horse flesh, or a fine roasted dog, and most of all it is for this that I am deprived of the privilege of society and the satisfaction of the converse of my friends!

The mountain men mourned deeply the loss of this fine leader; but, like soldiers, they kept their grief mostly to themselves. Generally they expressed their feelings by merely remarking that victims of Indian massacres were "out of luck." But to this common saying one of Smith's mountain followers who loved him, but also loved his cards, his horse racing, and his strong liquor, added: "He was a very mild man and a Christian; and there were very few of them in the mountains."

Behind him Smith left the vital geographical knowledge he had acquired. Before his death he had delivered sketches and maps of the Great Basin and upper Oregon and California to the Government, to Senator Benton, to Albert Gallatin, the Indian student and map maker, to the

Reverend Samuel Parker, who was preparing a map to accompany a volume of travels through Oregon, and to the Mexican and Hudson's Bay Company authorities.

Thus correct knowledge of the location of the Great Salt Lake, of the Sierras, the Uintas, the Wasatch, the Bear River, Bear Lake, and of the minor lakes and minor ranges of the Great Basin filtered into the maps of America.

There was only one important feature of the Great Basin that Smith missed in his explorations. This was the river rising to the west of the Great Salt Lake, winding its way for hundreds of miles toward the setting sun and finally losing itself in a sink in the desert. It was left for Peter Skene Ogden, Smith's rival trader, to discover this last of the large hidden streams of the Realm of Mystery.





Humboldt River, the last of the major discoveries in our Western frontier, found by Ogden in 1828.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

M'SIEU PETE'S LAST DISCOVERY

PETER SKENE OGDEN was not destined to remain in the mountains much longer than his great American contemporary, Jedediah Strong Smith.

Together in 1824 they came to the mountains — one from the British stronghold in the Northwest, and the other from the American frontier city of St. Louis.

Simultaneously they discovered the secrets of the Great Basin. For while Jedediah Smith worked out the contour of its southern and western rim, Peter Ogden worked out the contour of its northern and northwestern rim.

In the Sierras Jedediah Smith discovered the high mountain now known as Walker's Pass. In the same range, a little farther north, at almost the same time Peter Ogden discovered and named Mount Shasta — or "Shasty," as he called it — after an Indian tribe he found on the rivers flowing from its eastern base.

And finally, together they departed, Jedediah Smith to go to his death in the Cimarron desert and Peter Ogden to go northward out of the Snake country into British Columbia and still northward again as far as the Stikine River, before coming back in another decade to rescue the women and children survivors of the horrible Whitman massacre, to settle and finally to die in Oregon under the Stars and Stripes.

Both of these explorers contributed almost equally to geographic knowledge. Ogden told all he found out about the paths from the Columbia to California and from the Columbia to Nevada, to the Humboldt River, and to Utah, to the British government. His discoveries were incorporated in a famous map known as the Arrowsmith Map of the Far West. It was published in the fur-trading era and was hung up in each Hudson's Bay post.

The findings of Jedediah Smith, similarly, were incorporated in the Albert Gallatin map of the Far West. This map, published in 1836, was used for the journeys of the first Far Western emigrants. The Burr map (page 199) was also based on Smith's explorations.

Mule feasts and pack-horse feasts, even when the animals died of disease, had often been the luck of both of these bold explorers as they made common combat against the deep Nevada sands, and the burning Utah deserts. If Jedediah Smith was almost crazed by the alkaline waters of the desert water holes southwest of Great Salt Lake, Ogden suffered equally in the alkaline swamps to the northwest of this remarkable inland sea.

Christmas Day of 1825 found Ogden in a mood of despair as the successor of Ross in Snake country exploration. He summed up his feelings in these colorful words in his diary, describing his efforts to explore the headwaters of the Deschutes, the John Day, and the Burnt rivers:

"This being Christmas, all hands remained in camp and I held prayers. The cold increases. Prospects gloomy; not twenty pounds of food in camp. If we escape starvation, God preserve us, it will depend on Tom McKay's hunters. On collecting our horses we found one-third limping. Many of them could not stand and lay helpless on the plain. If this cold does not soon pass, my situation with so many men will be terrible."

And to greet the New Year of 1826: "Remained in camp. Gave all hands a dram. We had more fasting than feasting. This is the first New Year's day since I came to the fur country that my men were without food. Only four beaver today. Sent my men to the mountains for deer. Our horses can scarcely crawl for want of grass.

"But march they must or we starve. In the evening Tom McKay arrived without seeing the track of an animal, so this blasts my hope.

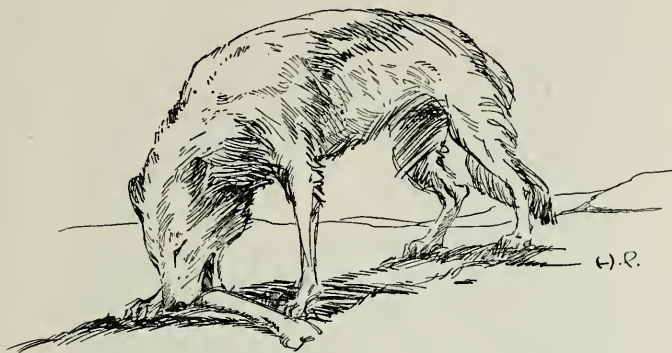
"What will become of us? So many starving men in camp that they start before daylight to steal beaver out of their neighbors' traps. Had the laconic pleasure of seeing a raven watching us today! The wolves follow our camp. Killed two horses for the kettle."

Such was the heroic Scotch stubbornness with which Peter Ogden matched the Puritan relentlessness of Jedediah Smith.

As he approached the Snake River from this first terrible journey into the wilds of southern Oregon, Ogden pictured even more gloomily the desolateness within and without his soul.

"We have been on short allowance too long and all resemble so many skeletons," he wrote. "We are skin and bone. More beggarly looking fellows the world could not produce. All the gay trappings of the beginning of the march have disappeared. Still I have no complaint of my

men. Day after day they labor in quest of food and beaver without shoe or moccasin to their feet. The frozen ground



The close of many a desert story.

is hardly comfortable for people so scantily clothed. Ten days east is the buffalo country of the Plains but in our present weak state we could not reach it in a month."

But Ogden did reach it, and returned to Fort Vancouver rich in furs. And he led three more Snake River expeditions after this one into the burning Oregon, Nevada, and Utah deserts.

How like the report of Jedediah Smith's journey from the Sierras to Great Salt Lake do these notes by Ogden read! They are from the journal of his journey of 1826-7 during which he discovered Mount Shasta and opened the trail from Oregon to California for the gold rush, due to come in another score of years.

Christmas Day, 1826: "Did not raise camp. We are reduced to one meal a day. Discontent prevails. We have yet three months of winter travel. God grant them well over and that our horses escape the kettle. I am the most unfortunate man on earth, but God's will be done. . . ."

"This life makes a young man old. Wading in swamps ice-cold all day, the trappers earn their ten shillings for beaver.

"March 26, 1827.— Our guide discovered a grizzly bear. One of the trappers aimed but only wounded it. Our guide asked permission to pursue it. Stripping himself naked, armed only with an axe, he rushed after the bear, but he paid dearly for his rashness, for his eyes were literally torn out, and the bear escaped to the sagebrush."

The horses plunging into alkaline swamps came out "looking as if they had been pickled."

Ogden noted "that we can't go on without water, *but the country must not remain unknown any longer*. There are Snake huts ahead; there must be muddy lakes somewhere.

"June 2. — I sent two men to proceed south east and try in that direction. They will march all night to escape the heat. If they do not succeed our starvation is certain.

"Sunday June 3, 8 A.M. — The two men arrived and reported nothing but barren plains. No water. No hope in that direction. I at once ordered the men off again north-east. All in camp very sick owing to stagnant water. If I escape this year I will not be doomed to come again."

A resolution Ogden could not keep, any more than Jedediah Smith could. Smith had met a young man named J. J. Warner in St. Louis some months before he started across the Plains on his final journey. To Warner, Smith said: "I have spent eight years in the mountains and I shall not return again to them. If you go to the Rocky Mountains for your health the chances are much greater in favor of meeting death than of finding restoration of health, and if you escape the former and gain the latter, the chances are you will be ruined for everything else in life than such things as would be agreeable to the passions of a semi-savage."

*Lawrence Hanson*

A Beaver dam on the Humboldt.

Even in this mood of mourning over dead companions Jedediah Smith is paralleled by Ogden. The Scot commander, while resting on the bleak shore of the Great Salt Lake, ushered in a New Year's day in this melancholy strain:

"There remains now only one of the Snake men of 1819 (the men who came south to Bear Lake under command of Donald Mackenzie); all the rest have been killed with the exception of two who have died a natural death. Their bones lie scattered over the Snake country."

If Smith, with wealth and leisure, could not keep out of

the wilderness trade, neither could Ogden keep out of his desolate Snake country until stern orders from his commanders caused his removal northward.

Ogden, indeed, "came again." And when he came in the fall of 1828, it was to work his way southward to the headwaters of the river named "Owyhee," in honor of Hawaiian trappers who were massacred along its banks, thence over the Great Basin Divide, and down to the banks of the river now known as the Humboldt.

The Humboldt Ogden at first named the Unknown River. Rightly so, for it remained hidden away, above and below the sterile sands of Nevada, until it was one of the very last physical features of our country to become known.

Ogden, last of the Scot explorers who had overrun America from the Great Lakes to the Pacific and from the Saskatchewan to the Arctic Circle, gained the final thrill of any of his kind as a passer-by in new lands, at the sink of the Humboldt. He recorded this event on November 9, 1828, in these words:

"I was surprised to find that the river takes a subterranean passage and appears again, a large stream lined with willows. So glad was I to see it that at the risk of my life I dashed over swamps, hills and rocks to it and the first thing I saw was a beaver house well stocked. Long before dawn of day every trap and trapper was in motion. As dawn came the camp was deserted. Success to them all. As far as I can see this river flows due west.

"Trappers arrived at night with fifty beaver. Indians paid us a visit. On asking what they did with their furs they pointed to their shoes. Examination showed them to be made of beaver. It is warm here as in September and the Indians wear no clothing. They are without houses or arrows or any means of defence."

Thus stands the explorer's own record of his discovery of the river that in the days of the Forty-niners became a River of Hope to thousands who nearly perished while crossing from the Great Salt Lake to its headwaters.





“Down they came swooping on Ogden’s camp.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

OGDEN AT OGDEN’S HOLE

FREEZING days were close ahead, in spite of the November warmth. And when Ogden’s new river became ice-locked he beat a retreat eastward toward a delightful little valley sheltered by towering shoulders of the Wasatch Mountains. From this winter on, the place was known to the mountaineers as “Ogden’s Hole.” It still is called Ogden Valley.

A vivid picture of this difficult, trail-blazing trip over the desert wastes is found in these lines from Ogden’s diary:

“Started northeast over a barren plain covered with wormwood at a good pace till night, and finding snow in abundance I camped.

“Two horses killed for food.

“A gloomy barren country. Except for the track of wolves no other animals are seen.”

And then on the day after Christmas, 1828:

“Had a distant view of Great Salt Lake. Heavy fogs

surround it. From the tracks buffalo must be abundant. At this place none. We are wretched and reduced to skin and bone. Hunters killed three antelope. This will assist, though poor food at this season. But it is far preferable to horses that have died of disease."

"Eight men, with my consent started in advance (on Sunday morning, December 28) in quest of food. Here we are at the end of Great Salt Lake, having this season explored half the north side of it, and we can safely assert, as the Americans have of the south side of it, that it is a country destitute of everything."

Ogden encountered a river, but did not know for certain whether it flowed into the Bear or the Snake. It was the Malade, lowest tributary of the Bear. He crossed it, following on around to the beautiful valley where Ogden City, Ogden Canyon, and Ogden Valley now honor his name.

While his cayuse ponies dug down through the winter snow here for good sustenance, one of his trappers, on a river to the southward, became involved in a quarrel with the Indians. The trapper was killed and scalped, and the river where this incident occurred was named Weber River in his honor, although the trappers themselves spelled it for a long time "Weaver River."

With the opening of spring, Ogden once more backtracked to the Humboldt through the Nevada desert sands, in which his horses often sank nearly belly-deep.

With his travois he was scratching out a trail for the gold hunters of '49 and for the first transcontinental railroad to follow.

He made his way down to the forks of the Humboldt, sent trappers along its banks, and gathered in a rich harvest of furs.

But Indians had heard the strange tales of white men in this country, and if the Utes of the Humboldt would not



Mount Shasta, a famous mountain discovered by Ogden.

fight, then the Modocs of the Shasta country would. Down they came swooping on Ogden's camp, 300 warriors strong, all in their war bonnets and painted for battle. A trapper going ahead to explore the lake into which the Humboldt sinks fortunately gave the alarm.

"He dashed in breathless with the word 'Indians,'" wrote Ogden. "He had a narrow escape. Only the fleetness of his horse saved him. When rounding a point in sight of the lake twenty men on horseback gave the war cry.

"He fled. An Indian would have overtaken him but he discharged his gun in the fellow's face. He says the hills are covered with Indians. I gave orders to secure our horses, and for ten men to advance and spy on what the Indians were doing, but not to risk battle as we were too weak.

"They reported more than 200 warriors marching on us. On they galloped."

And it was just here that the mettle of Scottish chiefs came to our Scot explorer's aid. He was no coward, and lived only by being constantly willing to face death:

"I signalled a spot for them to halt 500 yards from our camp. I went out, met them, and asked them to be seated.

"This order was obeyed. If they had not been discovered they had intended to attack us. Weak as we were — only twelve guns in camp — they would have been successful.

"We saw rifles, ammunition and arms among them. This must be the plunder of the sixteen Americans under Jedediah Smith, who were murdered here in the fall. They wanted to enter my camp. I refused. A more daring set of rascals I have never seen. The night was dark and stormy. The hostile fires burned all night. . . . I told the Indians in three months they would see us again, and we steered for Slayville's river." It was on the road back to the Columbia.

Behind him on the Humboldt Ogden left a grave, which held the body of a beloved comrade. This comrade was Jo Paul, who had been a guide for Nor'westers through Athabasca. He had sickened and died on the winter march from the Humboldt to Ogden's Hole.

"The Unknown River," wrote Ogden in a final salutation to it, "is Jo Paul's River, as he must remain here till the great trump sounds."

And why shouldn't it be the Jo Paul River? It is the Humboldt only because Lieutenant John C. Fremont, who came there some sixteen years after its discovery, marked it on a map he drew as the Humboldt, in honor of Baron von Humboldt, a German scientist, who never knew the river existed, but whom Fremont admired.

The Jo Paul who was laid to rest beside this meandering desert stream lives on in legends told more in Canada than



"He hurled it with a slam right down on the counter."

in the southlands. There, as the story goes, a Hudson's Bay Company clerk played a trick on him by filling a sugar barrel with lead.

As Jo Paul was famous for his strength, the clerk suggested that he lift this sugar barrel from the floor of his trading post to the counter.

Jo Paul gave a tug. It did not budge. Scenting the trick, he exerted all his powerful strength, and the lead-filled barrel yielded. He hurled it with a slam right down on the counter. It splintered through the counter and the floor to the bottom of the cellar.

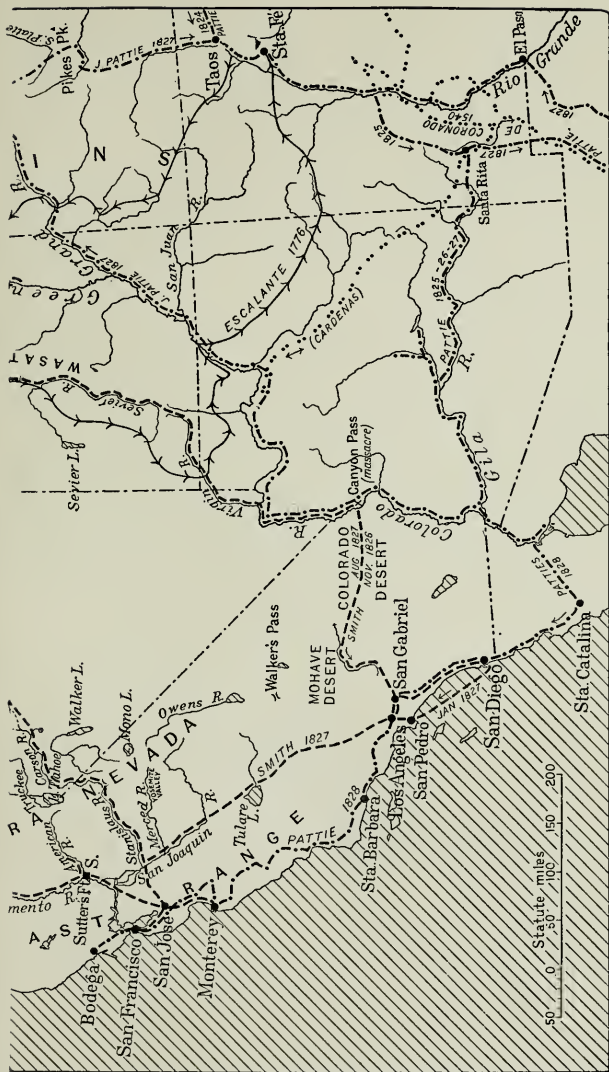
And while the disconcerted joker looked in amazement at the gap in the floor Jo Paul remarked, as if nothing was wrong, "*Voilà, mon enfant.*" ("There, my child.")

Jo was one of those French bravados of the Northland, who went everywhere with their Scotch leaders.

Among Ogden's friends the Unknown River became known as "Mary's River," in honor of Ogden's Blackfoot Indian wife, Mary. It was a pretty tribute to the faithful woman who had followed him through some of his most difficult struggles. Not many glimpses of her fine character have been saved for us; but one rare story has been preserved which gives a vivid picture of her brave mother heart.

This heroic little incident occurred in "Ogden's Hole" some time during the Scotch leader's closing days in the Mystery Land. Trailing in from California to this retreat Ogden found a strong band of his American rivals in his choice wintering place.

The quiet, sheltered valley beneath the towering peaks of the Wasatch was immediately turned into a scene of brawling. Probably the trouble was touched off by the Americans trying with gold and entertainment to entice Ogden's followers away from his service. A deeper reason



Map showing the routes taken by the early trail blazers and explorers of the Farther West up to 1830.

lay beneath it all, however. The Americans had not forgotten the mean treatment accorded Tullock and his men over the snowshoes. They looked, too, upon the British as intruders and were determined to drive them out of the Great Basin and the Columbia regions.

Anger naturally rose to the fighting pitch. Both camps drew apart as if for battle. A stampede of the horses followed, with the result that many of Ogden's animals dashed over into the American band. The Americans held these as war booty.

In the midst of the excitement an incident occurred that checked hostilities for the moment and touched all hearts. Attached to one of the stampeding horses in its papoose cradle was a babe. It was Ogden's child.

The Indian mother saw her babe being carried away into danger. Leaping on another horse she dashed after it right into the heart of the band of horses held by the enemy. There was danger that she might start a counter stampede.

"Shoot her!" cried one heartless mountaineer.

"No! No! She's a plucky gal!" shouted the others, with true Virginia gallantry.

And they all watched, probably with lumps rising in their throats, while the brave mother snatched her babe away from death. Then they saw she was a bit thrifty, too, for she seized the halter of another horse on which was a pack high-laden with peltries, and led it back to her husband's camp.

This story of Ogden's wife lived on to become one of the choice tales of the mountains. Old Joe Meek, the first sheriff of Oregon, never tired of telling it. He was one of the participants in the romantic little episode.

Outnumbered by his rivals, Ogden was forced to withdraw from the valley, the stream, and the canyon to which

he had given his name. He yielded possession most reluctantly. As he trailed away toward the northwest with his band dragging his lodge poles, he passed over the rim of the Great Basin and out of the Mystery Realm forever.

And what manner of man was Ogden? A roguish one, for Ross Cox, who found him presiding over a prison full of rival Hudson's Bay men at a Nor'west fort at Isle de la Crosse in Athabasca, wrote of him in 1817:

"We bade farewell to the humorous, honest, eccentric, law-defying Peter Ogden, terror of the Indians, and delight of all gay fellows."

Humorous and law-defying? When the Canadian government tried desperately to curb the pranks Nor'westers played against their Hudson's Bay rivals, they drew an indictment against Peter Ogden in Montreal. He then went in the most natural way in the world, obeying the spirit of Horace Greeley's famous injunction, "Go West, young man." Montreal thus lost a defendant in a lawsuit and the West gained a great explorer.





“Red Feather stopped at a distance to mock his pursuers.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

RED FEATHER'S LAST RIDE

A DASH of fire in the desert, a hasty mounting and riding for life on a swift horse that was yet too slow to outride the oncoming waves of the prairie fire — and the great Red Feather, chief of the Flatheads, was no more. Gathered in the twisting tongues of flame, his proud spirit had gone in a blaze of glory to the Happy Hunting Grounds of his fathers.

This picturesque death came as a reward of dare-deviltry. The story is one of the many thrilling Indian tales of the West. It is preserved for us by Peter Skene Ogden, who was with Red Feather, braving the Blackfeet, their common foe, when the incident occurred.

The Indians of the West had a passion for horse-stealing. They had, we must remember, no theater, no ball games, no movies, and no military encampments for recreation. Real fun must be found in other ways. In season there were the buffalo and elk to chase. At other times when life became too dull there were the horses of some rival's band. Stealing these was not held a crime; respect for property rights such as the Anglo-Saxon feels was lacking among the red men. There are few records indeed of war to the death over horse-stealing among the Indians. It was the favorite outdoor sport of the tribesmen. To steal quietly and escape — that was the test of skill that brought plaudits at home. The camp of the raided enemy was seldom molested as the pony herd was turned into a stampede.

The pursuit of horse-thieving Indians and the turning of the rescue parties into battles without quarter seems to have been an American novelty introduced into the mountains by Fitzpatrick, Sublette, and Bridger.

"My warriors were great horse thieves and brave men. Why did you kill them?" demanded a famous chief of the Crows as he met William H. Ashley on the Wind River after two Crows had been shot while in the act of stampeding horses at the Green River rendezvous. He seemed to speak in all sincerity.

One of the most romantic chiefs of the period was Red Feather. He was a man of stealth, not of anger and open warfare — the best horse stealer and strategist of the Flathead tribe. From the days the Sioux and the Blackfeet first obtained white men's guns, Red Feather had fought a losing tribal war; for he had only the Indian's bow and arrow with which to war against leaden slugs. He soon learned it was better to hold his peace than bravely rush out with his young men to die.

"The Blackfeet hate the whites," he argued, "and have declared perpetual war upon them. Why should not we Flatheads get some of these good guns? Why should we not march with the whites to war against our enemies? Let us hasten to make an alliance with them."

Would both parties join an expedition? The matter was submitted to Peter Skene Ogden. Decidedly he would. He needed reinforcements; for his party of trappers that year numbered only thirty men. If he joined a Flathead war party, armed it, and taught it the use of arms, it would strengthen greatly his forces.

So it came about that Peter Skene Ogden and thirty of his retainers joined Chief Red Father's band of 200 lodges. Ogden, luckily, in a small anonymous book, has left us a story of his curious expedition.

Here, then, is Ogden's own story, slightly condensed from the rare little book he called "Traits of Indian Character":

"Our march was conducted with much regularity. All

the arrangements were overlooked by a camp chief, known amongst us by the name of 'Cut Thumb.'

"In order to assure our party as much as possible against the ordinary risks of the way a position was allotted to us in the midst of the whole band. This position, whether on the march or in camp, we invariably occupied.

"In this manner we traveled for ten or fifteen days, occasionally meeting stray buffalo but seeing nothing of the enemy.

"But as at sea the calmest weather when it precedes a storm is the more to be dreaded, since the mariner is thereby lulled into treacherous security, so in these prairies an unusual interval of peace but too frequently augurs a speedy reverse of fortune.

"Thus did it prove in our case. Rendered careless by the seeming absence of danger, the Indians neglected ordinary precautions against danger. *For my part I maintained the usual discipline among my men* and soon had cause to congratulate myself for not having yielded to the lazy example of my Indian companions. For one morning it was found that a large number of horses had been stolen during the night.

"Every precaution was now adopted when of no avail; scouts scoured the country; whoops, shouts, maddening yells of rage resounded through the camp. Every circumstance pointed to the Blackfeet. It was also ascertained that the raiding party was retreating due west towards an extensive camp whose fires were discovered in a valley some twenty miles distant.

"Council upon council was held, and I was consulted every hour of the day. But like a skillful general I usually contrived the wording of my opinions to avoid committing myself in the estimation of either party.

"The final issue of all arguments was that the horses

had been stolen; the thieves were at hand, and at all risks reprisals must be made.

“Red Feather’s judgment rendered all preparations void. ‘Peace for a while,’ said he; ‘let us not be hasty: the Blackfeet are now on their guard. Let us send them the pipe of peace, and meet them as friends; we shall yet be quits with them before the grass has withered on the prairie.’

“The advice was acted upon. A grand meeting was agreed to. Repairing thither, we found the Blackfeet posted to receive us. After due allowance of ceremonies we proceeded to the business of the day, with all the consequence and sincerity of practised diplomats.

“The assembly was repeatedly harangued by the orators on both sides, who might have vied with Demosthenes in the energetic vigor of their language. The Flatheads recapitulated grievances from time immemorial. This was met by Blackfeet arguments having the same tenor.

“‘Only last year,’ cried a Blackfoot orator, ‘twenty of our warriors were cut off as with fire; three of their scalps now decorate the Red Feather, who stands before us. You, Cut-Thumb, with your spells and incantations have cast sickness into our camp, our children gasp for breath; our very horses are less fleet than is their wont. This is owing to your strong medicines, and the virtues of your hatred towards us.

“‘As for the horses you have lost the Shoshones must have taken them. Our young men are low spirited and are become as women. How could they have been so bold in action as to steal your horses?’

“A hollow peace was patched up and each camp went its way towards where they expected to find buffalo.

“Three days afterwards Red Feather came to my tent. ‘Today I go for horses,’ he said. ‘The Blackfeet are unsus-

picious; my young men have seen their camp. Their horses are unwatched. The Black must be mine at all risks.'

"He alluded to a war horse that from its symmetry of form had attracted my attention.

"Attended by two followers he went off the same night, not as usual on horseback, but on foot, each of the party carrying a small supply of dried meat, and a tough lasso that sufficiently declared the purpose of their mission.

"Meanwhile we had fallen upon buffalo. Joy beamed on every face, and the whole calvacade consisting of 300 horsemen were shortly engaged indiscriminately in the herd.

"As the chase neared its end a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon. All eyes were strained to discover its cause. The peculiar cry with which Indian jockeys urge on a band of horses, maddening them by some strange sympathy beyond conception, was heard from time to time.

"It was repeated with growing distinctness as the excited horses approached.

"A yell of welcome broke forth. Red Feather was recognized.

"As he drew near it could be seen that the horses were well-nigh exhausted. The foam, trickling down their quivering flanks, mingled with the dust and completely disguised their features.

"If they stopped to bite at a tuft of grass the shrill whoop, whose strange, discordant modulation it would be vain to try to express, would set them off again with redoubled energy, its unearthly sound seeming to act like enchantment upon the muscles of the jaded animals.

"Wearied to exhaustion, they yet seemed to rise superior to all bodily weakness when they heard the cry of their persecutors in the rear.

"Arriving at camp, Red Feather dismounted with a

bound, slipped the cord out of his horse's mouth and uttered a low 'whew' of complacency. They finished it with a hearty laugh at their exploit.



“They had crawled among the ponies, feeling each pony's feet.”

“After a dinner of boiled buffalo meat the fire was lighted in the calumet in the principal lodge and Red Feather recounted his tale of adventure.

“They had crawled so close to the Blackfeet that they had heard them boasting in their tents. They had crawled among the ponies, feeling each pony's feet but had not felt the feet of the black. At last they found him — tied to his master's hand while he grazed at the end of the tether and his master lay in the pasture beside him asleep.

“Red Feather did not dare cut the cord. It was as dawn was breaking that Red Feather found the prized horse. But he finished his story with a claim that he would yet come into camp astride the gallant black.

“A month passed during which I sought beaver in the brooks that form the South (Lewis and Clark) branch of

the Columbia. Red Feather was off again and was expected back, when one day a cry was raised which betokened an approaching party.

"The whole camp turned out to discover the name of the visitor. A single horseman approached at a gallop. As he drew near the son-in-law of Red Feather was recognized. He uttered no cry. His horse was wearied to the last extremity.

"Portentous tidings were doubtless on the eve of reaching us. In a few moments the weary beast came panting to the lodges, and the tidings of his rider were delivered in a few words: 'Red Feather is no more; he has gone the way of his fathers.'

"Then arose the cry of the fatherless and the widow; the wail of the companion and friend. The camp, lately so listless, resounded with one general wail of grief.

"The surviving companion of Red Feather told of his tragic death. The adventurers reached the Blackfoot camp unobserved and succeeded in reaching the envied Black. It was caught feeding in open daylight close to the Blackfoot lodges. With it was another — the two fleetest in the Blackfoot camp.

"Red Feather and his son-in-law mounted and were off. Their pursuers could not overtake them. The son-in-law made off at full speed but Red Feather stopped at a distance to mock his pursuers. Then suddenly the Blackfeet dismounted and in a moment the lurid red flame of a prairie fire leaped up at their feet.

"They had resorted to an old Indian trick to overcome foes. The wind blew directly towards Red Feather. The son-in-law reached marly soil where he was safe. He looked back and saw the flames rushing towards Red Feather faster than his horse could run. When he was within a quarter of a mile of the haven of refuge, the fire swept

over him, bearing both rider and beast down into its fiery depths.

"In a few moments all was over and Red Feather lay a blackened corpse in the prairie. Thus fell the boldest warrior of the Flathead tribe, whose renown yet lives among the wild races."

This tale of Ogden's was only one of the many thrilling stories that the explorer experienced or gathered as he made his way from one new beaver ground to another. They were days for heroes, surely.





“He managed to secrete himself as the wild horsemen dashed by.”

CHAPTER THIRTY

GATHERING OF THE MOUNTAIN CLAN

THE year 1832 marks, in the annals of the fur trade, not only the most interesting rendezvous ever held in the Rockies, but a sharp turning point in the fortunes of the fur business. Under the shadow of the lordly Tetons in the beautiful valley called Pierre's Hole the great gathering of the mountain clans occurred.

From every nook and corner in the mountain land streamed in the trappers and traders. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company's men were there in full force; for it was their rendezvous. The Hudson's Bay hunters made it their business also to be on hand. And even representatives of the old Astorian company came determined to win back their lost prestige in these regions they had pioneered in the fur business.

Besides these older groups there were other new ones. A host of free American trappers under a leader named Sinclair appeared. And, strangest of all, a company of codfishers from far-away Boston, led by Nathaniel Wyeth, happened upon the scene. The Indians were there, of

course. By the thousands they came to barter and to add to the picturesqueness of the assemblage.

An undercurrent of bitter rivalry kept things tense. Up to this time there had been no such close contact with the keen competitors of all factions in the fur business. Ashley's men, except for the little brushes with Ogden down in the Mystery Land, had had a free hand in the Rockies.

The Hudson's Bay Company had thrust its force into the situation. Tom McKay, the Scotch-Indian successor of Ogden, leading his band, had come brimming with confidence to carry out his charge to keep the mistrusted "Yankeys" east of the Rockies. It must have been a serious setback to the hopes of McKay and his gaudy French and Indian retainers when they saw the great rival host and later were shown the fighting spirit of these Americans.

It was a bit disconcerting also for him to find old John Jacob Astor's men back again to fight for the rights they felt they had been cheated out of by McKay's predecessors years before on the Columbia. Old Ramsay Crooks, commanding now at Astor's chief post on Mackinac Island, had seen to it that the Astorian interests were not neglected in this important Rocky Mountain conference. He had sent William Henry Vanderburgh and Andrew Drips, two determined fellows, to take care of them.

They were now at the rendezvous with open eyes and ears to get valuable information about the secrets of the Rockies. Representing the new, strong American Fur Company, they assumed much. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company's men were angered at their presence.

Heretofore no intruder into their counsels had ever asked them to share the secrets they had learned at such cost concerning the realm of mystery. They had no mind

now to teach these Astorian rivals — even though they were Americans — the trails to the beaver haunts they knew along the hidden streams and through mountain fastnesses in this great region.

How then would Messrs. Vanderburgh and Drips learn these secrets?

Well, if no one would volunteer, why then these Astorians were good at trailing others. They could go wherever the Rocky Mountain Fur Company men go — and these hunters, whether they liked it or not, might serve as involuntary pilots for their rivals!

This astounding proposition fell on the ears of young Bridger as a challenge. He already knew its meaning, for he and Fitzpatrick had met these men before, over the Rockies in the Powder River country, in the fall of 1831.

To escape them they had “sloped down to Portneuf” as they picturesquely described their midwinter flight across the passes of the mountain barrier. And yet here again were Vanderburgh and Drips.

Fitzpatrick learned that the interlopers had with them a third associate. He was Lucien Fontenelle, reputed to be of royal lineage — a scholarly Frenchman from New Orleans. At this very time Fontenelle was making his way up the Platte with goods for Vanderburgh and Drips to use in their trade.

But also coming up the Platte was the pack train, heavily laden, of old “Cap’n” Billy Sublette. “Cap’n Billy” had been unable to keep out of the mountains.

His partner, Smith, had gone to his death at a Cimarron water hole, his other partner, Jackson, had gone on into California to spend the rest of his days. But here was “Cap’n Billy,” heading his pack mules back to the boys he had left to care for the fur trade in the mountains. The gay life at St. Louis evidently had palled on him. Sublette

led sixty men, each having three heavily laden mules to manage.

Fitzpatrick, with a keen eye for business, saw that the best chance to win out at this rendezvous now being formed was to get word to Sublette to hurry on so as to arrive before his rival, Fontenelle. The man with the trading goods on the ground first would get the business. All that was needed was plenty of whisky for trappers and Indians, and bright beads and purple cloth for the squaws. For these the beaver pelts they had collected would be piled up in the trader's hands.

Fontenelle and Sublette were both back somewhere about the mouth of the Laramie. Between Fitzpatrick and his old commander lay the Teton mountains, with their dangerous pass, called by the trappers very rightly "the cornice," so narrow was the slippery trail across it. And beyond that lay the Green River valley where Blackfoot war parties always lay in ambush.

But the old mountaineer's blood was up. He would "ride express" to Sublette's pack-horse train and ride alone. He would urge the pack train forward and skin the cream of that year's trading before his rivals reached the scene.

So Fitzpatrick, now for the last time hailed by his Indian name of "Bad Hand" — a name derived from a gun shot wound received in the left hand — started on one of the most desperate rides of mountain history.

Going eastward, all went well. Leading a horse, so that he could always change a tired mount for a fresh one, should the Indians attack him, Fitzpatrick rode over the Teton Pass, across Jackson's Hole, up the Hoback to the Green River Mountains, thence down the old trail of Stuart, Crooks, and McClellan to and through the South Pass.

Another item was that a United States Army officer, Captain Bonneville, was also toiling up the Platte valley with a wagon train and 110 able-bodied men. He was on leave, to be sure, and pretended to be a beaver trapper; but one never could tell in those days of secret diplomacy.

There was another army officer in the mountains, too. He was now approaching the rendezvous. But he was from the British army and posed as a gentleman sport, out in the Rockies, so he said, because of his love of big game. Captain Stuart was his name — Sir William Stuart, Seventh Baron of Grandtully. He was traveling for sport only, he insisted — but he had a sketch artist along to make all the pictures that might seem attractive to him.

Fitzpatrick found Sublette on the Laramie River and delivered his "hurry-up" message. He rode with Sublette's pack train back to the Sweetwater, and then he determined to go on alone to drum up trade among the Indians, of whom nearly 1000 lodges of Flatheads and Nez Percés were awaiting the coming of the traders in separate camps in Pierre's Hole.

Sublette followed on, making all the speed he could. He reached the rendezvous, opened his goods for trade — and the laurel of the winner was his.

But where was Fitzpatrick?

Those at the rendezvous had expected him to come with Sublette. Those with Sublette had expected to find him at the rendezvous.

An alarm went up for "Bad Hand." And hunters set out on the back trail. Two Iroquois Indians, survivors of the band under old Pierre, brought in a human being they had found almost ready to die in Jackson's Hole.

Fitzpatrick's best friends did not recognize him, he was so emaciated. He had fought and starved, had been unhorsed and had hid in caves, and had swum rivers.

When too weak to hold his rifle and swim, he had let the weapon sink into the water.

The Iroquois hunters had come upon him after he had lain down to die. As food and rest revived him, his friends noticed that his hair was rapidly turning white.

And the story he told was enough to turn any man's hair white. In Green River valley a war party of Blackfeet had surrounded him. He abandoned his jaded horse, according to his plan, and rode for his life on his fresh animal. His device worked, for he distanced his pursuers and found refuge in a side canyon, where he buried his trail by riding far in a mountain creek.

He hid there, starving, for five days, and at last ventured out. But the Blackfeet were waiting for him. They rushed him this time when he had no chance to escape. He threw himself from the saddle, taking only his rifle with him. In a scrimmage he managed to secrete himself behind rocks as the wild horsemen dashed by. And without food, a blanket, or ammunition he lay in a mountain defile another five days. He knew the Indians were waiting to ambush him as he approached the valleys for food and water.

He left his hiding place in the night, and on foot made the long journey. A few berries were all the food he could find. But these tragic struggles were all forgotten in the joy of seeing his own company carry off the laurels. Through his daring ride Fitzpatrick had won the day.

He had won also a new name. It was given him in true Indian fashion from his physical appearance. Hereafter he was called "Chief Whitehead."



“‘Then fire,’ Antoine called out the order, and the Flathead with a grimace obeyed.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

SUBDUING THE BLACKFEET

WHILE yet the rendezvous in Pierre's Hole was in full swing, with its bartering, its carousals, and its strange New England town meetings, forced on Wyeth by his men to settle their difficulties, another kind of real excitement came to give a bloody finale to the rendezvous. The Blackfeet, hereditary enemies of all the mountaineers, following like bloodhounds on the trail of Fitzpatrick, suddenly thrust themselves into the scene.

Old Joe Meek's trained eyes caught sight of the marauders as they emerged from Trail Creek Canyon into the south end of the Valley. Riding arrogantly out of this mountain pass they came without even taking the precaution to keep their squaws and papooses for safety in the rear.

The morale of these mountain lords had never yet been broken. But it was to be broken now, on this 18th day of July, 1832.

Peace overtures opened the way to battle. The mountaineers, however, knew that these meant only that the ad-

vance scouts of the foe were playing for time to bring up the main war party in the rear.

Milton Sublette and his men recognized in the Blackfoot cavalcade the horses stolen from Fitzpatrick. With the Americans also was a young half-breed who had a vengeance of his own to work out. He was Antoine, the son of that Godin whose death on a desolate little river below the mountains had given it the name of Godin which it still bears.

As young Antoine Godin advanced to meet the Blackfoot war chief, he recognized that he was possibly the same murderer who had slain his father while he peaceably worked his traps. Antoine had taken with him a Flathead hunter who was famous for his straight shooting, and whose lust for vengeance against the Blackfeet, despoilers of his tribe, also was bitter.

In the open plain they met — these three.

"How, how!" exclaimed the Blackfoot. This word had now become the universal mountain greeting.

"Is your gun cocked?" asked Antoine of the Flathead.

"Yes."

"Then fire," Antoine called out the order, and the Flathead with a grimace obeyed. The Blackfoot chief fell dead. Antoine snatched up his purple mantle and went dancing gleefully back to the camp of the whites. His father was avenged.

The Blackfoot squaws rushed into a thicket and fortified themselves up, while their enraged braves rushed to destroy this little band of whites.

In such an emergency Wyeth's raw Boston boys were of little use. Neither were Sinclair's men, as they were mostly greenhorns. Milton Sublette's veterans rushed to the front, for here was a task for seasoned frontiersmen. The Boston boys were ordered to fort up, and act on the

defensive. This they did by building embankments of their pack saddles.

Then an express was sent dashing down the valley to old "Cap'n Billy." He spread the alarm of Blackfeet far and wide through the rendezvous. Men came streaming from every camp, "Cap'n Billy" at their head, stripping for battle as he rode. The old warrior of the mountains had a score of his own to even up with the Blackfeet, now that he could fight on equal terms or with an advantage.

It was a different fight these Blackfeet now faced. They could not, as they had always done before, ride down and slay a detached group of whites. Instead they must retreat to the fort their squaws had built. A new element of warfare — the warfare of consolidated groups of whites — had come into the mountains.

Ill fared the Blackfeet under the combined attacks of all these parties. "Cap'n Billy" led in the scouting close up to the Blackfoot fort, built high by now with logs the beavers had cut down for their dams.

Sublette saw an Indian's eyes peering through cracks in the log fort. He fired, and laid him low. He received a bullet in the shoulder, while Sinclair, who had followed him into the danger zone, was instantly killed. Robert Campbell, a close friend of Sublette, received the wounded veteran in his arms and carried him out to a place of safety.

The Flathead and Nez Percé squaws began to gather fagots to fire the fort, whereupon a voice from within called out in taunting oratory:

"You may burn us in our fort, but stay by our ashes and you who are so hungry for fighting will soon have enough. There are 400 lodges of our brethren at hand. Their arms are strong; their hearts are big; they will avenge us!"

Only night stopped the fierce fighting. Then in the

cover of darkness, the remnant of the brave but beaten Blackfeet stole away, leaving ten dead Indians in the fort, with thirty-two horses. On their bloody trail as they escaped they left twelve more bodies, secreted where they thought the whites would not find them.

Five days later Joseph Moore of Boston, with two grandsons of Daniel Boone and four others attempted to back-trail their route for home. They had hardly passed the "cornice" leading into Jackson's Hole when the 400 Blackfeet were upon them.

The grandsons of Daniel Boone knew how to take to cover and escape. But Moore of Boston stood as his ancestors had at Lexington and Bunker Hill. And on the side of a hill, as he turned to fire, he was dispatched. Two companions who rushed to his aid were laid low, one dead, and the other fatally wounded so that he died five days later.

This savage revenge by the main band of the Blackfeet was, however, not followed up. The mountaineers, they knew, were their victors. Haunted by the fear of overwhelming forces of their foes, the haughty tribe retreated.

On taking the back trail, the Blackfeet still thought they could vent their blood-lust upon helpless American foes. Down the valley of the Green they rode pellmell for the camp of an American greenhorn trapper. His hundred men they would use up least while they could still handle isolated detachments.

This greenhorn was no other than Captain Bonneville, with good American followers who might be greenhorn trappers; but they were not greenhorn fighters.

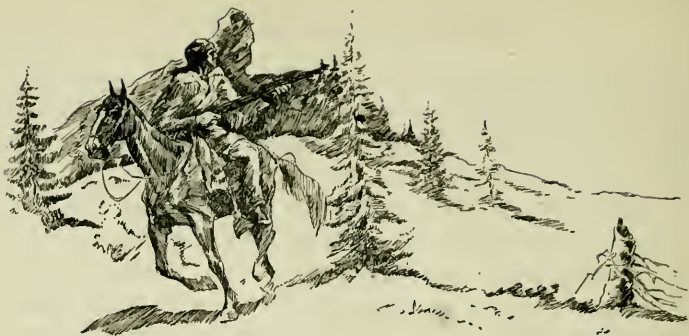
Bonneville had built a regular United States Army fort. It was on the road to Oregon. That was his secret reason. It was not like a trapper's fort. That is why the trappers who were not yet thinking of emigrant trains to Oregon

called it "Fort Nonsense." Whether it was "Fort Sense" or "Fort Nonsense," it terrorized and dismayed the Blackfeet. They circled far to the left and far to the right of it. They did not molest it.

The defeat of the Blackfeet by an organized band of mountaineers, and the bringing of military science into the mountains meant a new day. There were still serious difficulties to be cleared away, but the time was near when the mountaineers could trap and hunt and trade in peace throughout the Rockies.

The fight was now on to win this peace. The Rocky Mountain Company's men were out in dead earnest not only to clear the country of the Indian foes, but to sweep it clean of rival traders. An era of cutthroat competition for furs and battling the Blackfeet into submission followed.





"The chase led right through the Blackfoot country."

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

BRIDGER ON THE WARPATH

THE smoke of the battle of Pierre's Hole, had hardly cleared away before Milton Sublette was off to the southwest, to forestall McKay on the river Ogden had discovered, now called the Humboldt.

Americans found the desert between the Great Salt Lake and the Humboldt no less forbidding than Ogden had found it. They gained now some foretaste of what the Forty-niners were to suffer. With all their food gone, with their heads dizzy from the alkali waters, Sublette, and his companions were reduced to such straits, that bear-fashion they would thrust their hands into ant hills and when covered would lick off the insects. They were forced also to feed like the Indians on cricket droves, and in their great hunger they forgot all their former repugnance for such fare. They ate the crickets boiled, roasted and fried. Joe Meek tells the story, too, of being so starved that he and his companion even crisped their moccasins before the fire and ate them.

This hard fare of the trappers was not what they jestingly called "*cant tickup ko hanch*" — an Indian expression

signifying, "very fine food, my friend" — but, insisted Meek, "it kept us alive."

Up away from the deserts of Nevada and the Snake country they rode for the headwaters of the Missouri, for the winter hunt must now be made.

From now on the Rocky Mountain Fur Company ferreted out every beaver stream in the country of the Great Divide, the Great Basin, and the narrow, rock-walled valley of the Colorado where it made its roaring way toward the sea. Every corner in the Far West was crossed and crisscrossed by the moccasin-footed scouts in the search for new beaver streams to trap.

Gervais and Fraeb, the French and German partners with Bridger, Sublette, and Jackson, chose the mountain "parks" of northern Colorado. Here in 1841 Old Fraeb was killed in a fight with the Sioux and Cheyenne warriors on Battle Creek. Fraeb's grave, with those of three companions, just over the Wyoming line in Colorado, marks the scene of this last big battle between the trappers and the Indians.

Between 1832 and 1841, however, there was fighting in plenty. Following up their advantage in Pierre's Hole, Bridger, Sublette, and Fitzpatrick had held their mountaineer army together and swept, 200 hunters strong, wherever they pleased through the Blackfoot country.

Vanderburgh, with his Astorians, trying to follow Bridger's little army on these dangerous trails, paid for his folly with his life. The chase led right through the heart of the Blackfoot country. Bridger, holding his larger force of trappers together, was not attacked, but the Astorian party fell into the Indian ambush and suffered severe losses.

They entered a creek bed, and attempted to cross near a clump of bushes. All at once the bushes became alive

with rifle fire. The Indian foes outnumbered the little band of Americans, twenty to one.

Vanderburgh's horse, falling at the first volley, pinned down his rider. Three of his men seeing the odds were impossible, turned to flee.

"Boys, don't run!" shouted Vanderburgh, as he fired point-blank from his dangerous position beneath his horse, at the head chief of the attackers.

He saw his foe fall. He turned his pistol to continue the fight, but just then he was pierced by a shower of arrows and bullets from behind. Alexis Pillon, a French voyageur who remained with his leader, was also unhorsed and almost instantly slain.

Two others of the party escaped with severe wounds. All now fled eastward until they saw smoke from a camp-fire curling high into the heavens. They feared it was more Blackfeet, but finally found that the camp was of Pend d'Oreilles, a friendly tribe. Thither the discomfited Americans rushed for aid.

It seemed hard to them to let their leader lie in the open creek bed although it was dry at this time of year. They returned and found Vanderburgh's body mutilated by the fierce Indians who had slain him.

The hard news of Vanderburgh's death was brought to Bridger farther out on the bleak Missouri plains. He was rid of his rival American traders for the time; but he decided it would be better to withdraw into easier country for his own sake.

His party was strong. It marched in close order and could not be ambushed. Scouts rode miles to the east, west, north, and south before the horses ever were turned out to graze. Thus the trapper army moved in comparative safety.

But Bridger had not yet received his mark of mountain-

eering. The time had now come for him to face a situation he could not master. Blackfeet rode out onto the open plains. He prepared for a battle to the death.

These Indians had learned in Pierre's Hole that such battles were not good medicine for them. A chief rode forward for a council. Bridger rode forward to meet him, with rifle lying across the pommel of his saddle.

He cocked it as he drew near — a precautionary measure which the Blackfoot chief misunderstood.

Quick as a flash, remembering the affair of Antoine Godin in Pierre's Hole, the Blackfoot seized the barrel of Bridger's gun, and forced it to discharge itself harmlessly into the earth.

All was now in an uproar. Bridger was dragged from his horse, and two arrows were sent flying into his back. The chief mounted his horse and dashed back to his own people. Still there was no battle — for the Blackfeet remembered Pierre's Hole and were cowed.

A daring love episode that happened during this brush with the Blackfeet held all in both parties enthralled. Among Bridger's band was a young Mexican named Loretto. With him was an Indian wife and a beautiful baby less than a year old.

This Indian wife Loretto had ransomed from the Crows, who had taken her in a battle with Blackfeet. The wife recognized her brother in the Blackfoot camp, and rushed to him, heedless of the desultory firing on both sides, and of the hostility that was growing fiercer every moment.

She forgot, even, for the time being her baby. When thoughts of her little one finally flashed back to her mind, she found that the Blackfeet would not let her return to the American camp. She struggled — but in vain. Loretto saw her struggles and realized the situation.

Taking his child in his arms and equally oblivious to

the danger, he rushed to the enemy's camp, where he gave it tenderly to its mother. The braves bowed to his act. They would not, however, let them return together, but they left Loretto unmolested as he made his way back, after they had ordered him from their camp.

The love episode did not end with this cruel parting. Loretto dropped out of the mountain trade and became interpreter at the American Fur Company post below the falls of the Missouri. To this post the Blackfoot band came bringing Loretto's wife and babe, and exhibiting also the pistols and rifle of Henry Vanderburgh. Thus the little family was reunited, and lived long and usefully as frontier guides.

The arrows shot into Bridger's back he could not easily remove. One was of iron, barbed like a fishhook to tear and lacerate the flesh in any attempt to withdraw it. Bridger tried — and gave up. He carried the arrowheads until a Good Samaritan doctor came into the mountains and removed these torturing reminders of the Blackfeet.





"The mother and babe went on, snugly warm beneath the Virginian's cloak."

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

A GREEN RIVER POCAHONTAS

IN all the wild riding of Bridger's band up and down the Rockies they were not destined, of course, to tame the entire population of wild Indians without themselves being tamed a bit by the dusky beauties of the crags and mountain valleys.

There were love stories in the Rockies in those days, and sometimes Indian brides played heroic rôles in saving their trapper husbands from sudden massacre. Many of them became the mothers of splendid boys and girls who grew up to play an important part in the days of the first settlement of the West.

Such an Indian woman was the wife of Peter Skene Ogden; her children honored her name for many years in early Oregon history. They were looked up to as fine Americans by all who came in contact with them.

But of all the romances of the mountains the most unusual was that of an Indian beauty of the Crow tribe named Umentucken. This name had been given with a

true poetic spirit, for when translated it meant "The Mountain Lamb."

The romance which won her as a white man's bride began in the beautiful Bear River Valley, in Utah and Idaho, and ended six years later when a Bannock arrow pierced the beautiful Indian girl's heart and laid her dead at her trapper husband's feet, a sacrifice to the red man's jealousy.

The first chapter in the story reads almost like that of old Hugh Glass, because its hero, or rather its heroes — for there were two of them — were left behind by all of their white companions in the grassy valley of the Bear. Milton Sublette had been stabbed in a row with a Rock-away Indian of his own hunting party.

It was considered certain that he would die. Mountain men could not tarry when a spring hunt for beaver was on. So during the spring of 1832 they left Sublette beside the Bear River, to live out what were supposed to be his few remaining days.

Joe Meek, already called "Old Joe," and famous because he had tracked Indian horse thieves 100 miles on foot and had come back with the stolen horses plus a large number from the Indian band, was left with Sublette to bury him and mark the grave.

But the Bear River Valley, with its rich verdure and its fish-filled streams of splashing mountain water, was not a place which invited death. Sublette's wound improved. Fish which Joe Meek caught from the stream, and berries which he picked on the hillsides, brought a remarkable recovery.

After forty lonesome days, two strong men rode east out of Bear River Valley, to seek their friends at the summer rendezvous far to the northward in Pierre's Hole. They had taken the Green River Valley Trail as the best

way to the rendezvous. But as they laughed over the surprise party they expected to spring on Jim Bridger and their other friends, they suddenly found themselves surrounded by Crow warriors.

There was nothing to do but to make a race for life. By this time both Meek and Sublette were acquainted with the Crow language and Crow customs. They knew that the Crows respected their Medicine Lodge as ancient Greeks respected their temples. Far ahead of them the two riders saw the Indian village with this sacred tepee standing bold against the horizon, the most conspicuous lodge of all. Toward it they guided their horses as they sank spurs into their quivering sides and urged them to top speed.

The sanctuary they reached at last barely ahead of their Indian pursuers. Here they were safe, but only for a little while. No Indian could now drive an arrow through one of them and boast and sing about the deed at the next war dance. But the tribal council could condemn the prisoners to death, and order them to be sacrificed.

The council was duly called as the two white men sat gloomily in a dark corner of the great lodge. The Indians harangued for hours over the question of their fate. All seemed to be against them except one chief, Gotia the Good, who pleaded for their lives. He pleaded for the policy of peace that in the next generation made the Crows our greatest of Indian friends.

Meanwhile, outside of the lodge something was happening about which they were unaware. Umentucken, the beautiful daughter of Gotia, had heard her father's plea. She had heard the voices of opposition. And who can tell the ways of a maiden's heart? Maybe she had seen the handsome white men and, like Pocahontas of old, did not want to have an Indian war club end their lives.

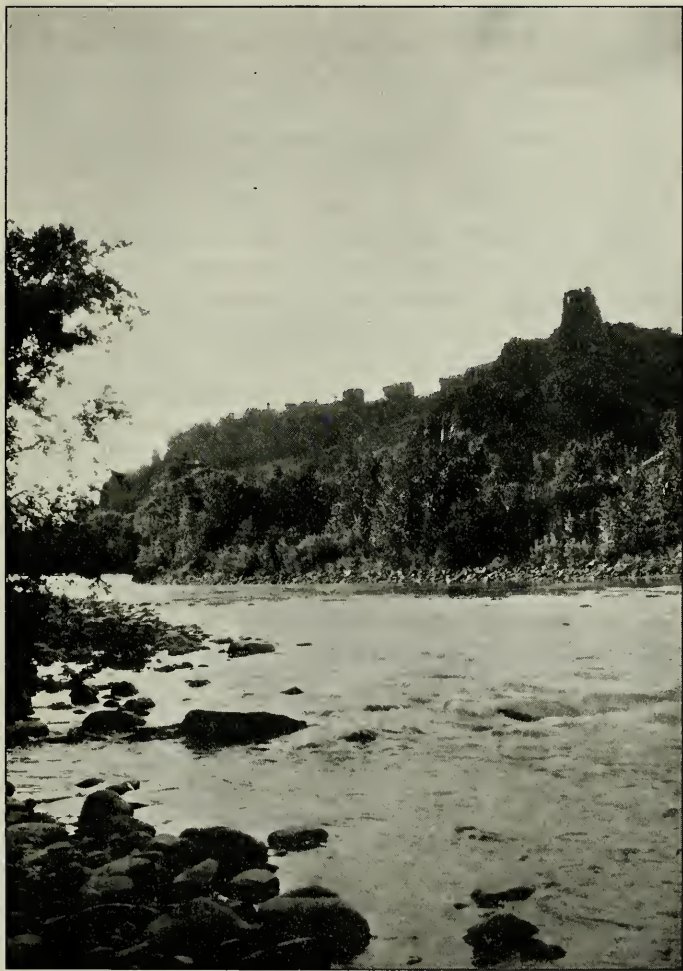
Whatever may have been her motive, the young Indian girl suddenly appeared beside the two prisoners. Excluded from the council in another part of the great tepee, they were lost in the shadows, and Umentucken had slipped under the buffalo robes where she would be least likely to attract attention.

She whispered her word of warning. "Outside your horses await you," she said. "Ride, ride for your lives all night. And tomorrow do not tarry."

The white men slipped out in the gathering gloom. They rode, as directed, all night and the next day they did not tarry. They finally regained their friends — but two white men had lost their hearts — and to the same dusky Indian lass of the mountains. They dreamed of their beautiful deliverer and wished, each for himself, that he might bear her away to be his own forever. Milton Sublette was soon to have his love blossom into romance, for he made friends with these Crows and was offered the hand of Umentucken by her father. After the Indian custom, he paid ponies and beads and scarlet cloth for her. And then he lavished much more of these to make his bride the most beautifully dressed girl among all the mountain clans.

Joe Meek also loved — and watched from a distance the man whose life he had saved and the girl who in turn had saved his own. Winter came and the trappers took the cold trail down out of the Rockies for the Snake River.

A fierce storm of snow and sleet came up out of the northwest when Umentucken was riding far behind the pack horses, with her newborn babe in her arms. Joe Meek saw that they suffered from the cold. Gallant after the manner of his real Virginia ancestors, Joe slipped out of his huge capote outer garment, and threw it over the shoulders of Umentucken.



The romantic region among the Green River crags.

Then for half a day he rode with breast naked and bared to the storm while mother and babe went on snugly warm beneath the Virginian's cloak. At the Portneuf camp they had to roll Joe Meek in the snow to get the frost out of him before letting him come too near the fire!

And Joe Meek loved the Mountain Lamb, too, with a love that was not wholly in vain. Sublette fell victim to an old wound in 1835, and started east to seek a surgeon's aid. At the fort built by his brother William and first named Fort William after him, Milton died. The memory of his life clings still about this old frontier post, now called Fort Laramie after a trapper killed on the river beside which it stands.

The widow found in Joe Meek an ardent wooer when it was made plain that Sublette would not come back to the mountains any more. For Umentucken he whirled his California lasso gracefully over the head of the most handsome pony in his herd and gave it to her for a mount.

Many years afterward, old Joe still insisted she was the most beautiful woman he had ever known. He gave her cut-glass beads, a saddle for which he paid \$150, and a bridle richly decorated with porcupine quills to match it. For this bridle he paid \$50.

He did not know it, but with his rich presents he was also giving his dusky bride her warrant of death. For the women in Indian tepees in the Rockies never let their spouses rest for talking about Umentucken. They wanted to know why they could not have such ponies, such a saddle, such a bridle, such bands of fine beads to decorate their shabby steeds!

It all proved too much for some young Bannock braves. Taunted by the girls to whom they made love because they did not offer gifts such as Umentucken had received, the Bannocks rode through the white men's camp on a

wild stampede. All were aroused. Umentucken came to the door of her lodge. A Bannock riding past loosed a swift arrow aimed fairly for her heart. She received her death wound; but she did not die alone. The chief of the raiding Bannocks was tumbled to the dust by a bullet from Joe Meek's rifle. When she had gone he mourned her as deeply and truly as any man ever mourned his sweetheart.

Her romance became a legend. Many a gloomy encampment in earlier days has been made brighter by the telling of this little love tale of the mountains, enacted in the times before white women had penetrated into the wild fastnesses of the Sweetwater, and the romantic region beyond the Wind River crags.





“The Indian dropped his basket of acorns and fled.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

MYSTERIOUS MOVEMENTS OF MILITARY MEN

WHILE the Astorian rivals of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were following “Old Gabe,” as Bridger was called, through the Blackfoot country in a chase to their death, another newcomer to the Rockies was having a most miserable time at the headwaters of the Salmon River in the land of the Nez Percés and Pend d’Oreilles.

The country along this stream was a favorite wintering ground for these Indians. Captain Bonneville, an army captain, who had one eye for beaver dams and another much sharper eye for the points where good American forts might later have to be planted as centers of the fight for Oregon, went there to winter with them.

He boasted a long name, after the fashion of French people. It was Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville. His father had fled from France to America for his opinions, and now the son thought the best thing he could do for America was to see what the Far West most needed — in a military way.

But like his great friend Captain Stuart, of the British Army, who was hovering around the same locality, posing as a big-game hunter, Captain Bonneville could not talk out loud of his real plans.

So he pretended a great interest in beaver, just as Fremont, who came ten years later, pretended a great interest in path-finding, although he traveled in the wake of emigrant trains over trails deep with the dust of travel.

Stuart and Bonneville, the first of these military figures to invade the mountains behind a "smoke screen," so that they need not disclose "military and hostile intentions," met often during this time. And Bonneville never cracked a single smile as Captain Stuart told him of his great buffalo hunts while trailing Fitzpatrick's men from camp to camp. Stuart likewise listened with a sober face while Bonneville told him soberly of the leave of absence he had obtained in order to trap and trade for beaver in the Spaniards' Land of the Northern Mystery.

Bonneville's eagerness for beaver, as we shall soon see, sent him hurtling over mountains in midwinter to spy out the Hudson's Bay Company forts on the Columbia and all its tributaries. Stuart's love for "buffalo hunting" was so great that during the next half-dozen years he could hardly ever be separated from a single American rendezvous, either east or west of the Rockies.

In this winter of 1832-3 Bonneville laid his real soul bare, where none but himself could see it. His faithful diary kept a military man's record of what was going on behind his "beaver hunter" mask.

The spot Bonneville now picked out in the Snake River country for a second fort was at the junction of the Portneuf and the Snake rivers.

One year later Nathaniel Wyeth, with a new force of determined Bostonians, built a trading post just at this

point. It was the famous Fort Hall whose site is now historic throughout all Idaho, Utah, and the Far West.

Bonneville did not come to blows with the Hudson's Bay overlords. He just gleaned information — and set off for the Green River rendezvous, abandoning temporarily the Snake River country.

At the rendezvous the old traders and trappers had another good laugh at Bonneville. Here he was coming in with twenty-two and a half packs of beaver. It was less than twenty skins to the man. No mountain trapper had ever done so badly!

The laughter of the trappers over Bonneville's poor luck in getting beaver was redoubled when they heard of his next plan. The captain called his men around him, and told them of the mountains that lay southwest of the Great Salt Lake. They must go to these mountains to find the beaver streams in them. Which of them would go on such a mission?

The experienced mountaineers jested and joked about such foolishness. They well knew the alkali deserts south and west of Great Salt Lake. And from sending four men in a canoe around Great Salt Lake in 1826, Bridger and his men had proved that this inland sea had no beaver streams flowing into it from the west and south. Any one, they felt, would be half mad to follow out such a plan.

But the army captain whispered magic words to his men, and to all others in the rendezvous. Those mountains he had pictured were not mountains of his fancy — he confided. They were the High Sierras. To the west and south they were — far to the west, to be sure. An American army officer on leave might not send men "officially" into Mexican country — especially country occupied by a Mexican government, with an army at its beck and call.

For the leadership of this diplomatic party Bonneville

chose his most trusted lieutenant, Joseph Reddeford Walker. Walker had been a guide in the Missouri River country since 1822, having come to Missouri from Knoxville, Tennessee, where he was born, in 1798.

Zenas Leonard, a free trapper who had come to the mountains from Pittsburgh in 1831, George Nediver, who was to become famous as the historian of the expedition, and about fifty-five other daring men went with Walker.

Bonneville outfitted the expedition so bountifully that his trapper "rivals" laughed at the way he squandered his means upon it. Having sent his explorers off from Green River, July 24, 1833, Bonneville himself set out for the Crow country, to see what his old friend from England, Captain Stuart and his mighty hunters were doing.

With four men, he started on Christmas morning, 1833, for the Columbia, leaving the rest of his party encamped on what was about to become the site of Fort Hall.

In the meantime Nathaniel J. Wyeth and Milton G. Sublette were sailing down the Missouri, Wyeth having in his pocket a contract from Sublette for a large amount of supplies, needed in the Indian trade. Wyeth's plan was to buy these goods on credit in Boston and return to the next annual rendezvous with them.

Walker's band of adventurers set out gayly for the land of the Golden Gate. They made directly from Green River to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, recruiting on the way the irrepressible Joe Meek, and some others.

There they confided to some Indians that they were going to spend no time at all bothering with the exploration of this shimmering sheet of water in the desert, but were going to rush right on over to the snowy Sierras.

The Indians in turn confided to the adventurers that they had better stock up well with meat, for they would need a supply to last them many days.

*Deseret News*

The majestic Wasatch Mountains, which play a prominent part in the stories of the early explorers and hunters in this region.

The Wasatch peaks above the Great Salt Lake therefore echoed to the crash of gun fire as Walker's men enjoyed their last great buffalo and antelope hunt. They chased game until they had dried down sixty pounds for each man in the cavalcade. Then they struck off west, into the land of Piutes, rattlesnakes, coyotes, and alkali.

From water hole to water hole they followed Indian trails, until they met the principal chief of the poor Indians inhabiting this desert. He told them to watch for a mountain with a snow-covered peak, as a westward-flowing river headed in this snow.

They followed directions and thus found the Humboldt. Down its valley they went, scarcely stopping to catch the beaver that still inhabited it, in such a hurry were they to get to California. They named it "The Barren River," because as Leonard, clerk to Walker, recorded, "everything here seems to declare that man shall not dwell."

On October 4th they reached the sinks of the Humboldt, and there they had a fight that men who did not face their

perils have long judged adversely to them. They found themselves surrounded by Indians, naked except for a few beaver-fur robes.

They did not know yet these stupid Digger Indians, too reduced to be skillful in war, or bold in attack. The Americans fortified themselves up with the lake in their rear and their baggage in front.

The Indians came on, dancing and singing as they came. Perhaps they recalled the traditions of their forefathers about "white gods from the east" and wanted to welcome them as Montezuma had welcomed Cortez into Mexico.

But Walker ordered them to halt, or he would open fire and kill them.

They asked by means of signs how he would do it, and he had his men shoot the heads off two ducks in the lake. Then he peppered a beaver skin full of holes as it lay upon the lake shore. The Indians fell on their faces and retreated.

But they followed the Americans next morning — a party of eighty-six or a hundred in their advance guard. Among the Crows or Blackfeet it would have been a most menacing sign. So it seemed to Captain Walker, and his men were ordered to open fire. They did so, killing thirty-nine at the first onslaught. The rest howled in dismay and rushed into the high grass of the lake shore. The lakes are still called "Battle Lakes."

Up into the Sierras they pressed until the land behind them "looked like molten seas of granite whose waves had suddenly congealed."

Climbing these granite wastes, they followed an Indian trail where possible, until their food became exhausted. Then they began to kill and eat their horses, killing one after another until seventeen had thus made their way into the hunter's dinner pot.

They thought they had reached a summit but for five days more they continued on westward without being able to make sure. They were in the regions now of the famed Yosemite wonderlands.

"Here and there," wrote Leonard, "small streams would shoot out from high snow banks, and after running a short distance in deep chasms, would precipitate themselves from one lofty precipice to another, until they were exhausted in rain below. Some of the precipices appeared to be more than a mile high."

Thus did they make their record of the discovery of the world's highest waterfall, the Bridal Veil, now so famed in Yosemite Cove.

As they were trying to find a route down from the giddy heights into the Yosemite Valley they came upon an Indian with a basket of acorns on his back below them. This he dropped as he fled, and the whole party had an acorn feast — the first food they had found since entering the mountains.

After finding an Indian trail down the precipices, they killed a deer beside the trail, and Leonard wrote that it was "dressed, cooked, and eaten in less time than it would take a hungry wolf to devour a lamb. It was the first game larger than a rabbit we had killed since the fourth of August, when we killed the last buffalo near the Great Salt Lake."

They found rocks in the trails around which they could not pass their horses, so they tied ropes around them and lowered them without injury. At last they reached the level plain, and in striking off across it they found redwood or sequoia trees, "incredibly large — some of which would measure from sixteen to eighteen fathoms around the trunk at the height of a man's head from the ground."

The hunters who found them first were laughed at by



““Small streams would shoot out from the snowbanks—and precipitate themselves from one lofty precipice to another.””

the men in the main camp. Every one had to see before he could believe this marvel in nature.

As they lay down upon the rich California soil to sleep, a roar came up out of the earth to assail their ears. It did not stop — but seemed continuous. Some of the men thought it an earthquake, and feared they would be swallowed up.

“But Captain Walker,” wrote his clerk, “suggested that the noise came from the Pacific rolling and dashing against the shore.

“The idea of being within hearing of the *end* of the *Far West* inspired the hearts of every member of our company with a patriotic feeling for his country’s honor. We felt as if all our previous hardships and privations would be adequately compensated if we should be spared to return in safety to our homes and our kindred and have it to say that we had stood upon the extreme end of the Great West!”

And a little later they had this experience, after they had followed the San Joaquin River to San Francisco Bay and then had trailed around the bay to the ocean, which they beheld being lashed by a stormy gale.

Leonard expressed his feelings in these words about this new land:

“Most of this vast waste of territory (over which they had come from the Platte) belongs to the Republic of the United States. What a theme to contemplate its settlement and civilization! Will her hardy, free-born population here plant their homes, build their towns and cities, and say, here shall the arts and sciences of civilization take root and flourish?

“The Spaniards are making inroads on the South — the Russians are encroaching with impunity along the sea shore to the North, and further Northeast the British are

pushing their stations into the very heart of our territory, which even at this day more resemble military forts to resist invasion than trading stations."

Then Leonard added a code for his government, which he was destined soon to be preaching back at his home in old Missouri:

"Our government should be vigilant. She should assert her claim by taking possession of the whole territory as soon as possible. For we have good reason to suppose that the territory *west* of the mountains will some day be equally as important to the nation as that on the *east*."

These American wanderers were treated to a great sight off at sea. They saw their beloved Stars and Stripes floating from the mast head of a good ship, which proved to be the *Lagoda*, under Captain Bradshaw from Boston. There was a feast aboard, another ashore, and then the Americans were off for Monterey to visit the Mexican Governor and his suite.

They found long-horned cattle, running wild — the same long-horns that made the plains of Texas famous in later years. They found vaqueros who lassoed grizzly bears and dragged them to corrals where they turned them loose to fight with infuriated bulls.

They even watched the vaqueros catching grizzly bears — two at a time, so that if the bear rushed a vaquero whose noose was around its head, it could be pulled back by his companion, with a noose around the bear's hind leg.

The wealth of California in wild horses, in fine soil, in rich groves of timber lay spread out before them. They learned to throw the lasso almost as well as the natives themselves. They learned the graces of the fandango, and without knowing that they were picking out a future home for several of them, they learned to love their California.

In the early spring they took up the homeward trail,

having learned by this time how to consult the Indians. Guides led them over the Sierras in four days by a pass known ever since as Walker's Pass.

They faced the perils Jedediah Smith had previously faced in the Nevada desert, for they were far south of their Barren River. Horses and dogs both died from thirst.

They retreated out of the desert, back to the Sierras, and finally found their old track along the Humboldt. They followed eastward until they found their chief, Captain Bonneville, in the rich pasture lands of Cache Valley, on the Bear.

To satisfy carping critics at rendezvous, they had brought back a few beaver—but they had a tale of California calculated to fire the heart of every man who heard it and a tale of a route across Nevada and across the Sierras beyond the desert.



"From the right hand of the French bully fell his rifle."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

MISSIONARIES GET A TASTE OF MOUNTAINEERING

FOLLOWING in the wake of the trail-blazing mountaineers, came missionaries into the wilds of the West. First of these, in company with Nat Wyeth, on his second trip, were Jason and David Lee of the Methodist faith. These earnest men had come in response to an inquiry carried by four Nez Percé and Flathead Indians to St. Louis regarding the white men's "Book of Heaven."

While Wyeth stopped to plan his trading post, Fort Hall, on the Snake River, at the spot Bonneville had selected for a military post, the two missionaries journeyed on into Oregon to carry their message to the Indian tribes.

Out into the West, also, in the summer of 1835, came Dr. Marcus Whitman and the Reverend Samuel Parker. When they rode into the Green River rendezvous on their

mission to plant the Cross out in the country beyond the Rockies they found there a horde of untamed frontier folk — white and red — trading, drinking, gambling, and fighting out their feuds. Not much of the spirit of the Gospel was in evidence; the work of the missionary seemed sorely to be needed.

In a little book of his travels, the Reverend Mr. Parker has given us a record of this first venture of missionaries in this part of the mountain land. Had he not been so absorbed in things spiritual as largely to overlook temporal matters, he might have made a brilliant picture of the famous mountaineers he met there, for which history would ever be his debtor. As it was he retired disdainfully at critical moments to read his Bible under a tree while the rendezvous progressed and thus he let a remarkable opportunity slip by.

Fontenelle, friend of the murdered Vanderburgh, Jim Bridger, Fitzpatrick, Kit Carson, and the 200 or more mountaineers who hunted and trapped under their leadership — all were there. Brigades of free trappers also, and even Tom McKay of the Hudson's Bay Company had dropped in to share in the festivities.

From out of the mountains also had come a tribe of Indians which heretofore had held aloof. These were the "Yutas," as the Spaniards called them, or the "Eutaws" of the French, and the "Utahs" of the Yankees. Their home land was down in the Green River valley toward the region of the Navajos. They had crossed the Uintas along trails known to them from time immemorial.

From the north had come also the Shoshones of Idaho and the Flatheads and Nez Percés of the more northern Rockies.

Why this flattening of the head, and this piercing of the nose, and why the burning of the thighs of the Brule

Sioux? The men of the white man's church asked these questions in vain. For the Indians held their religious rites so much a secret that they would not in those days explain them to strangers. Each tribe marked itself in some distinctive way to show submission to the Great Spirit, commander of their Happy Hunting Ground.

As the two clergymen looked down upon this strange assembly of wild mountaineers and wilder Indians, their ears were suddenly assailed by the coarse profanity of a French bully's challenge.

"Does anybody here want a fight? I can flog every Frenchman here; and as for the Yankees I could cut a switch and switch them. That's the kind of a whipping they are fit for!"

The challenger rode back and forth through the tepees, with great bravado.

"Does any American want a willow switching? I am Shunan — Shunan, the strong man. Come out and get your whipping."

The disgusted men of peace and prayer book preferred to retire under a tree apart from the rough mountaineers. But suddenly their notice was arrested by a young American.

Advancing out of his tent, this youthful mountaineer said quickly: "I am an American. I am the humblest specimen of an American in this band of trappers. There are many here, to my certain knowledge, who could chastise you, but being peaceably disposed, they keep aloof from you. I now assume the responsibility of ordering you to cease your threats or I will be under the necessity of killing you."

The bully from the North turned and walked to his lodge. It needed no words to tell the young American what this meant in the mountains. Captain Shunan

would soon be coming back, rifle in hand, ready for a duel.

Challenged thus, the young American — a son of Kentucky, whose progenitors had intermarried with the family of Daniel Boone, walked in his turn to his own tepee.

A few moments later the Frenchman came riding forth, mounted for battle, with his rifle lying across the pommel of his saddle, lightly held in place by his left hand.

The young Kentuckian also mounted was ready for the challenger, but with only a single-fire Dragoon pistol in his hand. It was the first weapon he had found, and he did not want to seem a second tardy in appearing on the field.

The missionaries, trappers, Indians, and traders from St. Louis, formed a great circle, and down upon each other toward the center rode the two mountaineers. All knew it was a duel to the death.

Driving spurs into their horses, on they plunged until the heads of the two animals touched. Both men fired at what seemed the same instant.

From the right hand of the French bully fell his rifle to the ground.

On the left cheek of the young American appeared a black smudge, but it was not tinged with red, as were the trigger finger and wrist of his French antagonist.

The crowd now took charge of affairs. They found that the Frenchman's gun had been fired so close to his antagonist's head that the powder had burnt a smudge across his cheek, while the bullet clipped a lock off his hair. They found that Carson with supreme mercy had fired merely to disarm and not to kill his antagonist.

This was the dramatic entrance into mountain fame of Kit Carson, a man of iron and steel, who had come up from

Santa Fe to gain the training that made him the most famous scout for Uncle Sam in the years just ahead.



"The doctor pursued the operation with great self-possession and firmness."

He brought new blood into the mountains. After this the Northern hatred of the oncoming Yankees never expressed itself in challenge to combat. But the Indian hatred and fear of the New Day worked itself out in terrible massacres.

One of the most unfortunate victims of this Indian fear of white settlers was the man who now came forward to play his part as a mountain missionary, with a surgical training. He was quick to offer first aid to the humbled Frenchman.

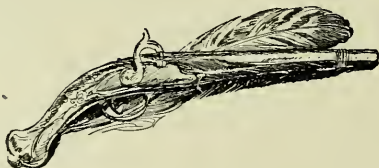
After Shunan had been helped, Jim Bridger, still suffering from the Blackfoot arrows shot into his back, presented himself. Dr. Whitman, after examining the old wounds, volunteered to extricate the torturing steel. It was for such services that he had come to the mountains. He prepared for the operation simply by making him a leafy bed beneath the trees on which to lay his patient. No woman nurse had yet come to the mountains; there were no anæsthetics. Around the missionary surgeon stood only a wondering assemblage of wildish folk.

In his report of what happened, the Reverend Mr. Parker wrote, "The Doctor pursued the operation with great self-possession and perseverance, and his patient manifested equal firmness.

"The Indians looked on meanwhile with countenances indicating wonder; and in their own peculiar manner expressed great astonishment when the arrows were extracted. The Doctor also cut out another arrow head from the shoulder of one of the other hunters, which had been there two and a half years. His reputation being firmly established, calls for medical and surgical aid were almost incessant."

When this rendezvous broke up, there was a scattering of the people there on various missions, meaning much for the new era that had dawned in the mountains.

After gaining his fame at the Green River, Dr. Whitman decided that the time was not just ripe yet for him to go on. So he turned back, to recruit men, supplies, and — well, perhaps certain tender ties drew him homeward.





“Then came the squaws to gaze upon the first white women they had ever seen.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

DEDICATING THE MOUNTAIN LAND TO MOTHERHOOD

IT was strange news in the mountains that reached the ears of the mountaineers at their rendezvous on the Green River in 1836.

The word that now thrilled the mountaineers was none of these rumors native to mountaineering. It was something else in which was a memory of home. And it fell upon the ears of men who had not seen home for eight and ten years at a time.

“Women are on the Sweetwater Trail,” were the magic words, — “women like our own mothers, white women,” Anglo-Saxon women, pioneer women who had helped to build Kentucky, when that was the “Bloody Ground” where old Edward Robinson was scalped long before he came to the West.

How had these white women accomplished it? There was a kind of axiom that no woman could take to the Sweetwater Trail and live. Fitzpatrick was back there on

the trail, with his white hair to testify to what tragic adventures one might meet on this very trail. It was Fitzpatrick, indeed, who was bringing the women.

The party which included the women had two wagons — a heavy one drawn by mules and a lighter one drawn by horses. With them they had many things suitable for homes, which no mountaineer would have thought of bringing to the mountains.

Now that the women were really coming, what were the mountaineers going to do about it?

There were hundreds of Indian women at the rendezvous with their dusky lords. They knew what they were going to do about it. They did just what all daughters of Eve had done since the world began. They sent their lords to the traders' stores after vermilion paint. And there was such a hair-combing bee as the mountains had never before known. Hair was tamed down into ruly plaits; and these were hung with brass ornaments, while cheeks were freshened up with the most gayly-colored paints the trappers could produce. Even saddles were trimmed with new porcupine quills, dyed brilliantly, and decorated with new beads bought in abundance for this gala day.

Then there started eastward down the Sweetwater a mad whooping, yelling, shooting cavalcade. They were Americans, "old men of the mountains" — not old in years but in experience. They had been away from their mothers since tenderest childhood.

Joe Meek, the runaway boy who had come to the mountains while not yet twenty, and was now an old, bearded veteran, although yet well under thirty, was leader of the wild welcoming bands.

The mountaineers decided that these women should have the finest reception the Wild West could afford. One of them was the bride of Marcus Whitman, who had been

there the year before and had taken the arrows out of Jim Bridger's back and out of the back of another mountaineer. So she needed no other introduction to be assured the warmest of warm welcomes.

"They have passed Independence Rock," was the last word the mad riders had as they swooped down the Sweetwater in quest of the exciting joy of being the first to greet the newcomers.

Out on the Plains, as the mountaineers, escorted by a host of Flathead and Nez Percé warriors, came over the brow of a hill, the caravan was descried. One of them had the forethought to put a bit of white rag in the muzzle of his rifle. Otherwise they rode down for all the world like a lot of whooping, shooting Blackfeet.

The greenhorns in the westward-moving train thought that they were surely in for a fight. They hurried up the spare stock, began to arrange carts for a fort, and made all preparations for defense. Meanwhile, the noisy cavalcade came nearer and nearer.

But Fitzpatrick's watchful eye caught the message of the white flag, and told everybody to fire when the enemy fired, but he advised that they fire over the heads, as it was only old Joe Meek and his pals, coming down to whoop things up for a greeting.

On they came, whites and Indians. Before they reached the head of the Fitzpatrick column they wheeled to the left and right and started what seemed a complete duplicate of an Indian surround. It was a surround just such as had cost millions of buffalo on the Plains their lives. It duplicated, even, the tactics of the Sioux when they sent Custer and all his men, many years later, to their last resting place in the Western hills.

But this was just a surround of boyish affection and mother love. The mountaineers from the rendezvous fired

over the heads of Fitzpatrick's cavalcade and the men under Fitzpatrick fired back.

At last up rode Joe Meek, in his finest buckskins, with his horse covered with foam.

"May I welcome Mrs. Marcus Whitman to the Mountains?" he called out, doffing his beaver hat very low. He was very proud of being the first man that ever doffed a hat to a lady in the Rockies.

There was now no thought of going on. The two parties joined in a general celebration. Then they wended their way slowly up to the sterile rolling hills of the South Pass.

On horseback rode the stronger of the two women, Narcissa Prentiss Whitman of Angelica, New York. She was twenty-eight years of age, with auburn hair, blue eyes, and a face that was the picture of happiness and perfect health.

In the lighter of the two missionaries' wagons rode the other woman. She was slightly built, dark-haired, and now was growing weaker each day as a mountain ailment took away her strength. Her delicate features were colored only in the pallid shades of her serious illness, and her own husband doubted whether she would ever live to see Oregon.

So came to the mountains Eliza Hart Spalding, wife of the missionary, Henry H. Spalding, the first collegian to attempt a mountain career. He had graduated in 1833 from the Western Reserve University. He was now in the mountains because his frail little wife had insisted on his obeying the biblical injunction, "Go ye into all the world," pointing out at the same time that it made no exceptions for frailty or ill health.

In the high altitude of the South Pass, with its dreary wastes of sand and clay, Mrs. Spalding fainted. It was thought that she would die.

"Leave me and save yourselves," she told her husband and Dr. and Mrs. Whitman. "Tell mother," she added, "I am glad I came."

Thus they carried her onward as her spirit fought the complainings of her sorely tried body. The mountains had gained their heroes in the decade just drawing to a close. Now they gained the first of their heroines.

At midday, on July 4, 1836, the little cavalcade escorting these first white women to enter the Far West stopped beside the waters of a westward-flowing stream. And there Mrs. Whitman dismounted from her horse, while Mrs. Spalding was helped feebly from her wagon couch.

What happened has been recorded in an official report to Congress in these words: "Six years before Fremont, following in the footsteps of these women, gained the name of 'Pathfinder,' they knelt on the other half of the continent, with the Bible in one hand and the American flag in the other and took possession of it as the home of American mothers and the Church of God."

The light wagon with its precious burden trundled on down to the Green River and rolled into the rendezvous. Hundreds of Indians in their gayest paint and feathers joined the escort for the final stretch of the journey.

Then came the squaws to gaze upon the first white women they had ever seen. Mrs. Whitman attracted the most attention, with her commanding manner and buoyant healthfulness. But soon the tale went around among the squaws about the white woman who was ill.

They had no trouble telling what was the matter, for they had suffered much from the same illness while eating too much fresh-killed buffalo meat. They brought forth their Indian cures of herbs and roots. In a few days Mrs. Spalding was up from her sick bed and was from that moment a full member of the Sisterhood of Mountain

*Fred H. Kiser*

Horsetail Falls, one the many beautiful scenes along the Columbia River.

Women. For them she had come as a missionary; for them now she proposed to live.

The white men said the wagons could never get through to Oregon, but Indians said they would go along and cut a way where necessary. So the wagons rolled on to Fort Hall. Then the lighter wagon was changed into a two-wheeled cart and it was pulled along to Fort Boise, which the British had built to offset Nat Wyeth's American outpost.

Mrs. Spalding was now well enough to mount a horse; and she did so, for the final climb over the Blue Mountains on her way to Fort Vancouver.

There the missionaries knocked on the strong iron-knobbed front door on November 12th. Brave old Dr. McLoughlin came out to welcome them, and with stately

courtesy escorted the first white women to cross the Rockies into his citadel of feudal power.

When Joe Meek had said goodbye to these ladies at the rendezvous, he had promised to follow on in a few years and settle down beside the Whitmans. He little guessed then that he would carry out his promise, and eleven years later would be chosen as the messenger to ride pell-mell across the mountains in the dead of winter, to carry the tale to Washington of the martyrdom of Dr. and Mrs. Whitman at the hands of the very Indians for whom they had been such benefactors.

White mothers in the mountain land meant the making of homes and permanent settlements. These must be protected. Who would make safe the trails over which the women and children were soon to be coming by the thousands and give protection to the villages and towns that would spring up wherever they went with their husbands and fathers?

At the breaking up of the rendezvous on the Green River in 1835, Captain Bonneville headed back to Washington to help solve this question. It was no story about beaver, you may rest assured, with which he held the attention of the leaders of our Government there. A problem of much deeper significance was being discussed between them and this well-informed adventurer in the Western wilds. Their interest was centered in keeping open and safe the way to Oregon.

How could this be done?

As if in answer to the queries of the mountain men almost before they had framed them, there came tinkling against the rocks of the South Pass a silvery sound. It was one which the mountains had not known before.

The sound to the fearful mother's ear was much sweeter than the pounding of traders' horses along the trail, or

the creaking of wagon wheels as patient mules drew them on to Oregon. It was the jingle of swords in their scabbards and the cavalymen's spurs on their boots.

Far up in the hills the Indians watched. Here was something new from the land of the Great White Father. His sons were now galloping into the mountains in procession. And what a procession!

The watching red men saw a string of fifty black horses, two abreast. And behind them, riding with all the vigor of the whirlwind, came fifty grays. And these had hardly passed in a welter of dust when fifty bays appeared. Fifty chestnuts followed the bays, and then, as if to suggest a benediction on all of the white men's hopes for the Rockies and a farewell to all of the Indian aspirations, rode a final group of fifty blacks.

The Indians whispered to each other in much fear. "Wawhatonga!" they said. Wawhatonga — the Long Knives. And from this day on in the mountains cavalry were known by the name of "The Long Knives." Up to this time the United States had no permanently organized cavalry. It had mustered out its mounted troopers at the close of each war, keeping only the infantry and artillery as the regular army.

Bonneville had gone back to Washington and had been reinstated in the army. He had urged upon all his associates that since the Indians usually dismounted to fight, the one sure way to get them was to ride them down with cavalry. He had urged that the trained horse was necessary as well as the trained man, so that if a soldier were killed another could mount and ride on. He desired an end to the practice of accepting volunteers, each of whom came on his own horse. And now the cavalry was following Bonneville's wagon trail across the roof of the continent, just as he had long prayed that it might.

Commanding this first regular cavalry of Americans was a gallant officer, Stephen W. Kearny, soon to achieve enduring fame through leading these same cavalrymen into Santa Fe and on to California as commanding officer of "The Army of the West."

In immediate command of the detachment that made this first march through the South Pass was Captain Philip St. George Cooke, a brave, determined youngster who had just been graduated from West Point. He himself recruited many of these soldiers — the first cavalrymen the regular army of the United States had ever had.

On through the dry washes of the South Pass rode the handsomely bedecked column of horsemen. They were determined to look upon the country then called Oregon before they turned back. This resolve was carried out. Of his arrival at Green River, Cooke records in his diary:

"Oregon. Tomorrow we march in return, thus drinking two days in succession, both the Atlantic and Pacific waters. A kildeer and a sparrow are the only living creatures we have seen on this mountain edge of Oregon."

It was on the banks of the Laramie River that Colonel Kearny assembled the chiefs for a powwow.

The talk centered about Oregon. Kearny told the Sioux about the Great White Father and his thousands and thousands of "Long Knives" he could send out if he was vexed. And he would be vexed if the Sioux molested the ox-carts that were soon to be upon the Plains.

Captain Philip St. George Cooke, who was in immediate command of the cavalrymen, makes this record in his diary:

"The Indians all seated themselves in a great semi-circle behind which was another of women and children.

"The Colonel made a short, plain speech which hinged on the Oregon road.

"Bull's Tail, the principal chief, made a short and sensible reply which promised well that the Colonel's advice would be obeyed. Turning to his warriors he addressed to them some words to increase its impression.

"Presents were then placed in the center, and the chiefs selected seven Indian soldiers who received equal portions of every article and distributed them at their own discretion, their awards being final."

When the pioneers a few years later came through this same Sioux-infested country, they could not understand why the warriors they had expected to fight came to them to beg a little food and a few quids of tobacco. The Indians still held in mind the picture of the dreaded Long Knives who would return to destroy them if they took the war path!

And fear of these Long Knives as it happened spread much farther than the realms of the wild mountain tribes. On down into the Oregon went the tale of their ride through the South Pass.

Respect for this treaty, coupled doubtless with a wholesome fear of the "Long Knives," kept the Indians generally peaceable for many years along the pioneer trails to the West.



Sutter's Fort, Sacramento, California.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

SETTLING AN OLD SCORE IN CALIFORNIA

It was only a shabby remnant of the mighty mountain clans that gathered in the summer of 1845 in Brown's Hole for the last rendezvous in the Rockies; but despite the outward appearance of things this rendezvous was one of great significance, for here it was resolved that the next meeting of the American mountaineers should be at Sutter's Fort. This resolve led to the capture of California for our country and incidentally the settling of an old score that the men of the mountains had long held in their hearts for the tragic mistreatment by the earlier-day inhabitants of that land of Jedediah Strong Smith and his followers and successors.

So far as the fur-trading business was concerned, its palmy day had passed. But there remained a signal service that trappers and hunters might yet perform. The day of conquering the region beyond the Rockies for the

oncoming settlers was at hand. Who better than these mountain-bred men of steel could do this task? The answer was shortly to be made by these men in a few swift, sure strokes.

For some years the question of possessing the mountain empire had been pressing hard upon the leaders of our land. Already settlers were beginning to stream up the Platte River trail to find homes in the West. Under what flag should these homes be made?

The British were active. Sir George Simpson, as Governor of Rupert's Land — the fur hunter's paradise in the Great Northwest — had hurried up the Saskatchewan and down the Columbia into Oregon. He scattered promises to settlers as he went — promises of land grants, of homes, of help — from the great Hudson's Bay Company. He reversed all its former policy toward settlers and home makers.

He even swung down into California to buy the guns of the Russian fort at Bodega, beside which the Russians had established a wheat field to supply their Alaskan fur stations with bread.

Sir George came — but found he was too late. The Russian fort had been sold. He could only wave goodbye to his Russian friends, and shake his fist at the "Yankey" who had fortified up a Western key position for the taking of the Great West.

This Yankee, like many another who did yeoman service in the making of America, was a Swiss immigrant who had settled in Kentucky, in Missouri, and in Oregon in turn. He was Captain John A. Sutter of Sutter's Fort, on the American River.

Sir George shook his fist at Sutter as this old Swiss soldier quietly smoked his pipe in a fort he had modeled after those in which he had stood guard in Europe. As

its twelve Russian cannon of iron and two Russian cannon of brass frowned down upon the Hudson's Bay post at San Francisco, Sir George raised his voice in this lament, which he recorded in an all-too-faithful diary:

"This Sutter is understood to have served in the Body Guard of Charles X and to have emigrated after the three glorious days of 1830 to the United States. If he really has the talent and the courage to make the most of his position he is *not unlikely to render California a second Texas*.

"American trappers have frequently stalked into California towns with their long rifles, ready for all sorts of mischief. For fostering and maturing Brother Jonathan's ambitious plans Captain Sutter's fort is admirably situated.

"The only possible way of preventing such a result is previous occupation on the part of Great Britain. English, in some sense or other of the word, the richest portion of California must become; either Great Britain will introduce her well-regulated freedom of all classes and colors, or the people of the United States will inundate their own peculiar mixture of helpless bondage and lawless insubordination."

"Remember," Sir George cried to the Mexicans, "that as Texas has been wrested from Mexico on one side of the continent, so will California be speedily lost on the other." The Mexicans listened but remained indolent and indifferent to the appeal.

Sir George stormed and went away. His followers beat a retreat out of California; one who had invested much of the company's money in anti-American revolutions sending a bullet through his own head rather than go home and attempt to explain his failure.

There was a jingle now of mounted men's spurs all the way from Independence, Missouri, over to Sutter's Fort.

If the mountaineers could not hold their mountains for themselves, at least they could keep a rendezvous at Sutter's to fight for the oncoming settlers.

Into the Green River region now came riding a young army officer, with followers, who prated much of sextants and the stars — and at the same time practiced driving bullets through the bull's eye of a target. These men listened with ears close to the ground for rumblings of war, either on the Columbia or on the Sacramento. They communed with the mountaineers and gathered the whispered tale of the coming rendezvous at Sutter's.

Was there among the mountaineers any man of iron who could guide the leader straight to the best places from which he might be of service when the time came to win the Far West for our country?

The mountaineers had such a man in Kit Carson, who had been trained for ten years in a school of self-reliance, that could give the mettle needed for this service.

If Kit could live for ten years in the Rockies on the produce of his own rifle and keep alive, he certainly could guide Fremont on to California — and keep him alive there for his great tasks that lay ahead.

So Kit went west from the Uintas in 1845 as a guide. He and Fremont, who became friend as well as commander, hovered about the edges of Oregon and California — waiting — waiting. If challenged, they were simply a scientific exploring party. If not challenged they were merely waiting. One night there galloped into Sutter's a lone courier. Gillespie was his name. He was of the Marines; American boys need know nothing more to guess what was the mission that brought him out from Washington.

He bore a secret packet and he had orders to find Fremont. At Sutter's a blacksmith, conveniently left

there the year before by Fremont, knew a thing or two about the trails that led straight to this leader. It was not long before Fremont was handed the message that made his great task clear.

A campfire was made that night beside Klamath Lake, and Kit Carson arranged his saddle for a pillow and his blanket for a bed. Fremont sat beside the fire, reading the word from Washington that was to make California ours.

Only once before had Kit fallen asleep without a guard on duty, and this was when he spent a night with Fremont on an island in Great Salt Lake.

Now he trusted Fremont, and Fremont, after reading until very late, had not the heart to wake a trusted companion. Instead of doing so, he rolled himself in his blanket, little realizing how near at hand Death stood ready to strike.

The fact that Kit Carson always slept with one ear open for signs of danger alone saved the precious camp on that important night. It was just one of those signal services of the mountaineers to the era that was now on.

"Basil, what's the matter there?" Kit called out as something disturbed the stillness of the night.

There was no answer. A Klamath Indian's war club had crashed through the skull of one of Kit's most trusted friends.

The Klamaths charged now, hoping to kill all the American band in the confusion of battle. But these were not the kind of men who could be overawed and put into a panic. A white man's bullet laid the foremost Indian low.

Fortunately Kit himself has left in his own words the story of what followed:

"There were no orders given. Things went too fast, the Colonel had men with him who did not need to be told their duty. The Colonel and I, Maxwell, Owens, Godey,

and Stepp, jumped together, and ran to the assistance of our Delawares.

"I don't know who fired and who didn't; but I think it was Stepp's shot that killed the Klamath chief, for it was at the crack of Stepp's gun that he fell. He had an English half-ax slung to his wrist by a cord, and there were forty arrows left in his quiver — the most beautiful and warlike arrows I ever saw.

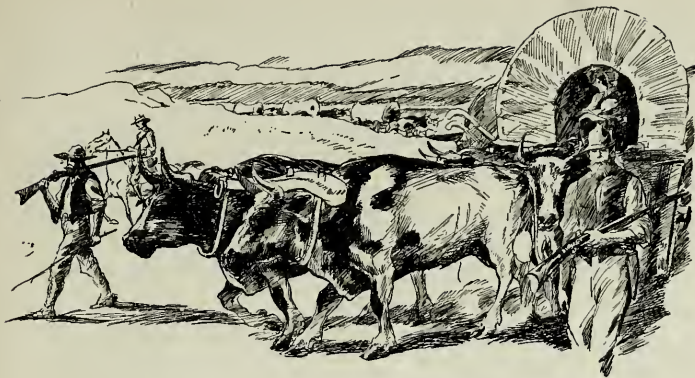
"He must have been the bravest man among them, from the way he was armed and judging by his cap.

"When the Klamaths saw him fall they ran; but we lay, every man with his rifle cocked, until daylight, expecting another attack."

The Indians, however, had fled. Kit led the way to their village and burned it. He described it as being the most beautiful Indian village he had ever seen. It was put to flames only because Kit's idea of justice did not let him leave a field of battle with his foes unpunished after they had struck foul blows.

Fremont was alive, and directly before him lay Sutter's Fort, Sonoma, the Bear Flag revolt, and the swing through California that broke the grip of Mexican power there, in the eventful summer of 1846. Upper California, by these swift strokes, had fallen into the hands of our country.

Kit Carson rode to the east with the story of the capture of California. At Sante Fe he passed the message over to his old guide and teacher, Fitzpatrick ("White-head"), who proved his old-time mettle by making a record-breaking ride on to Leavenworth with the word that California had been won.



“An emigrant train rumbled up to the South Pass.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

THE MOUNTAINEER WELCOMES THE PIONEER

WITH the Stars and Stripes afloat over Sutter's Fort, with Kearny's "Army of the West" on guard at the Los Angeles entrance, with the British withdrawing from Oregon, the Land of the Northern Mystery was ready for American occupation.

But who would come to settle and redeem this great arid region? What people would dare the experiment of making their homes in the desert realm that lay between the Sierras and the Rockies?

Along the northeastern edge of this hidden realm, settlers were already streaming by the thousands on to the fertile, moist soils of western Oregon. No thought had they of taking up claims in the great dry Basin. Its trails, almost knee-deep with choking dust, gave them all of that land they wanted and more.

Around Cape Horn and over the Isthmus of Panama the race for the rich, damp lands of California had begun. A few years later this race, quickened by the discovery of

gold along Jedediah Smith's American River, would become a maddening rush.

California was soon to be filled not only with gold-seekers but with home-seekers. No thought would these give to the Mystery Land except that those who had taken the overland route would curse its deserts, which had held them back and killed thousands of those that were ill-prepared to cross these wastes.

Would any people ever try to conquer such a region and make it habitable?

Old Jim Bridger, the last of the mountaineers, sat in his fort out in the Rockies and pondered over the question.

Unwilling yet to leave the hills and valleys he loved, the old trapper had met the changing days by planting at the eastern gateway of the Great Basin a trading post. Fort Bridger it has been called ever since, in his honor.

In a letter to his friend Henry Chouteau, in St. Louis, Bridger tells of his decision to turn a new trick in the trade by building this way station at the point where the old Oregon and the Great Salt Lake trails divide.

"I have established a small fort," he wrote to Chouteau, December 10, 1843, "with a blacksmith shop and a supply of iron, on the road of the emigrants, on Black's Fork of the Green River, which promises fairly.

"They in coming out are generally well supplied with money, but by the time they get there are in want of all kinds of supplies. Horses, provisions, smith-work, etc., bring ready cash from them and should I receive the goods hereby ordered will do a considerable business in that way with them.

"The same establishment trades with the Indians in the neighborhood who have mostly a good number of beaver with them."

When Bridger penned these lines, he was recording the

close of the old fur-trading era in the Rockies. Chittenden, the historian of that period, writes that this letter marks the end of the fur trade in America as definitely as the return of Lewis and Clark from the Columbia marked the beginning of it.

In 1843, the great ox-team rush for Oregon began. Fort Bridger proved, as its founder had foreseen, a most welcome resting place for the wearied emigrants. The old mountaineer was thriving at the new venture.

But the question as to who would come to settle the Great Basin still remained unanswered.

Seventy long years had passed since white men had first looked upon this then hidden land. The secrets of the mountainous region during those years had been solved one after another by the daring trail blazers. Yet the realm still remained almost exactly as Father Escalante and his followers had found it when, baffled by its deserts, they had turned back.

Around the region the snow-capped mountains still stood stubborn guard. Down from these the streams came leaping to the fertile sage-spread plains, across which they wound on to the alkali flats and saline lakes that dotted the deserts. The Great Salt Lake, largest of all these remnants of the prehistoric inland sea, still lay there flashing back the flaming sunsets and mirroring the mountains just as when Jim Bridger had floated in his old dugout canoe down the Bear River to discover it.

The desert valleys lying around the great lake were rich and needed only the magic touch of irrigation to make them "blossom as the rose." Here, indeed, was an empire in the mountains waiting for a people who would come with courage to subdue and possess it. The heart of the Mystery Land was beating a welcome for some one, but for whom?

As Bridger watched at his old log fort, pondering over the problem, there came an answer to the question. Four years after his post had been built, an emigrant train rumbled up to the summit of the South Pass bearing the vanguard of an exiled people seeking a place wherein they might live in peace. They were looking for a kind of Promised Land.

Some years before, when the question of settling the West was a burning one, Joseph Smith, the leader of this people, had predicted that they would one day move out into the valleys of the mountains. He had even offered his "Nauvoo Legion" to help hold Oregon for our union. In one of the songs they had created, their hope was expressed in the refrain:

"Oh, Upper California!
That's the place for me."

Upper California then included the Great Basin.

Bridger had served hundreds of emigrants on their way to the West, but this was something new. This people traveled as an organized community. It was a kind of military system they maintained, their train being divided into groups of fifties and tens with captains over each.

A religious spirit was also strongly in evidence. When at night their wagons had been "parked" in a big fortlike circle, for the purpose of protecting themselves and their stock, and when supper was over, they would meet to sing and preach and pray before retiring.

They had their community recreation also. The fiddle was often brought out to cheer up the journey. Sometimes they would dance, too — out on the greensward.

Old Jim Bridger, sitting high on a mountain side, heard the rumble of the pioneers' wagons below him. He strolled down to investigate.

From the covers he saw plows protruding. And in

the wagon boxes he saw seeds for planting. Mothers smiled as they crooned their babes to sleep. These people had come with sober purpose to build permanent homes.

But where could they find the land of which they had been singing in their hymn of hope? Twice driven from their homes, they sought now a place where they could be free from mobbing and driving. Some place that no one else wanted would fill their needs, provided there they could make a living.

They appealed to the old fur trader for information and he gladly told them what he had learned about the mountain land. It was on June 28, 1847, when this council was held between the discoverer of the Great Salt Lake and the vanguard of Mormon pioneers who were to settle the lands around it.

With Father De Smet's general descriptions, and Fremont's descriptions of a more specific nature to guide him, Brigham Young probed more deeply into Bridger's knowledge of the mountains.

"He told us while we were spending some hours in conversation with him," Woodruff, one of the leaders of the pioneers, records, "about the mountains, lakes, rivers, valleys, mines, etc., of nearly all Oregon and California.

"We found him a great traveler. He spoke more highly of the Great Basin for settlement than Major Harris had done. [The same old Major Harris of Ashley's first mountain expedition, whom the Mormons had met the day before, eastbound from California after twenty-five years in the mountains.]

"He [Bridger] said it was his 'paradise' and if his people settled in it he would settle with them. He said there was but one thing that could operate against its becoming a great grain country, and that was the frost. He did not know but that the frost might affect the corn.

“He said he was ashamed of the maps of Fremont, who knew nothing about the country beyond the plain traveled road, and that he could correct all the maps published of the Western world.”

After gaining this and other valuable information from the old mountaineer, the Mormons bade farewell to Bridger. He went on to Fort Laramie, to see about supplies, and they pushed on to the canyons of the Wasatch, threading their way down through them; and on July 24, 1847, their leader cried out as he beheld the Great Salt Lake afar across a desert waste, “This is the place.” His words have become historic, and a monument now marks the spot where they were spoken.

An advance party under Orson Pratt, an apostle, had already gone ahead into the Valley. These men were busy plowing land on the bank of a canyon stream. After having broken a plow in the sterile soil, they had turned on water from a ditch to soften the land. And thus had been born among Anglo-Saxons in Utah the science of irrigation which was to conquer it. Men from General Kearny’s Mormon Battalion, who had seen the ancient Indian art of irrigation in Santa Fe, were there to help in this work. Brigham Young had instructed others of the leaders about irrigation, as he had read of it in Fremont’s reports and the reports of travelers to the Spanish Southwest.

The Mormons planted their bags of seed potatoes, and their City of Refuge was soon under way on the banks of a stream whose waters they had taken out for irrigating purposes.

This stream they named City Creek. The mountain pass through which they had come they named Emigration Canyon, and their old trail will ever be for their followers a hallowed place of pilgrimage. The river below them, which cut across the valley from Utah Lake to the



Utah Lake near the source of the Jordan River, which flows north into Great Salt Lake.

Great Salt Lake they named the Jordan, after the sacred stream in Palestine, which ran like this one from a fresh water lake into a salt sea.

All these changes were baffling to the old mountaineers. One of them, Kelley, had lamented at Brown's Hole in 1839 that, what with the going of the buffalo and the fall in the price of beaver, "this country was no longer fit for a white man to live in."

Now arose in great lament the voice of Peter Ogden, whose mountain retreat at Ogden's Hole was filling up with settlers. The Mormons had bought from Miles Good-year his mountaineer stockade with its goats and cows and horses, and also his claim held by virtue, he said, of an old Spanish grant. On this land the new settlers began what is now Ogden City, named for the British trapper.

"It is hard to conceive by what inducements so many thousands of reasonable men," wrote Ogden in the security of his new place as chief factor at Fort Vancouver, "could have been prevailed upon to leave their comfortable homes

and fertile lands for this wild adventure; except, indeed, the spirit of enterprise which seems to be inherent in the Anglo-American race, and which rejoices to meet and overcome every difficulty, is sufficient to account for it."

Ogden himself, destined soon to fall under the Hudson's Bay Company's displeasure, as McLoughlin had before him, was to find a way out by settling near McLoughlin, under the Stars and Stripes in Oregon, and to farm a piece of land among these same Americans whose spirit so sorely puzzled him.

"We have letters," his friend James Douglas wrote in the last Hudson's Bay Company report upon the Great Salt Lake country, "from Fort Hall up to the 30th of December, 1847. A city has sprung up as if by enchantment in the midst of the desert, near the southern extremity of Great Salt Lake.

"It contains a population of 3000 and numbers within its precincts 600 houses. One flour mill was in operation and four saw mills were nearly finished."

Thus the Hudson's Bay Company bade farewell to the Land of the Northern Mystery, so much of which Peter Skene Ogden had explored.

Bridger lived on for about ten years more in his old stockade on Black's Fork. Then he sold out the post and his "Spanish Grant" claim to the Mormons, and went back to Missouri. Later he became an army scout and in this capacity, like Kit Carson, he found his opportunity to perform signal service for his country, when old Red Cloud had decreed death to all whites that dared to come across his hunting grounds.

On a hot July day in 1866 Bridger, now an old and infirm man, but strong in spirit and as alert as ever to Indian wiles, saw some mysterious marks on buffalo skulls.

His knowledge of Indian signs enabled him to read here a call for all Indians to assemble at Crazy Woman's Fork for a massacre of whites.

That was enough for Bridger. An army scout now, he knew where army detachments were camping. Riding hard for help, he spread an alarm which brought white men as well as Indians converging on Crazy Woman's Fork.

Then he rode alone to the rescue, and found a beleaguered detachment of forty or more men who

were using their wagon boxes for intrenchments and keeping the Indians off only by virtue of new repeating rifles. He threaded his way through the Indian lines alone.

"Who are you?" demanded the whites.

"Jim Bridger," the old veteran called out, "and 200 good Americans are only three miles back, coming on the run to help you."

And that was why he was made chief scout at Fort Phil Kearny, toward which this beleaguered detachment was making its way. For some years he served on as a guide for the soldiers on their expeditions through the Rockies. Then he retired to close his days quietly on a farm in old Missouri.

But he was not to remain in quiet for long. When the



Monument to Jim Bridger in the Mount Washington Cemetery, Kansas City.

Union Pacific Railroad was being projected, some one must be had to show the surveyors the easiest passes through the Rockies. Old Jim Bridger was called into service again. Out to the mountains he loved they brought him in an overland stage to point the best way for the pioneer transcontinental line. The pass finally chosen is still called Bridger's Pass!

Under the shade of evergreens in the beautiful Mount Washington Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri, now sleeps this last of the hardy mountaineers of the old fur-trading days. On the granite monument above his grave erected by General Dodge, one of the builders of the Union Pacific, is recorded a touching tribute to this great mountaineer.

Jedediah Strong Smith, Peter Skene Ogden, and most of the other old mountaineers who helped to solve the secrets of the Land of Mystery lie in unmarked graves. But the story of these daring trail blazers of our last frontier must not remain unknown longer. In the lives of these "Hidden Heroes of the Rockies" is a rich heritage for every true American heart.



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For preserving accounts of the Old West in a way to show how its Pioneers and Settlers worked upon splendid foundations laid down by its first path makers, trappers, and mountaineers, the world is indebted first of all to Washington Irving. Irving not only knew the intimate stories of the first generation of Far Westerners, but he wrote in imperishable English of their deeds. More than that, he inspired many other men to write of the West, from Peter Skene Ogden down to Theodore Roosevelt. Chittenden, Cooke, and several of the Astorians were inspired by him to pen their stories of the Great West. Other writers whose works have been freely drawn upon in the preparation of this little book include the following names:

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DELLENBAUGH, F. S. Ms. Copy of Robert Stuart's diary of the first crossing of the continent from west to east, obtained in the Ms. Division of the New York Public Library.



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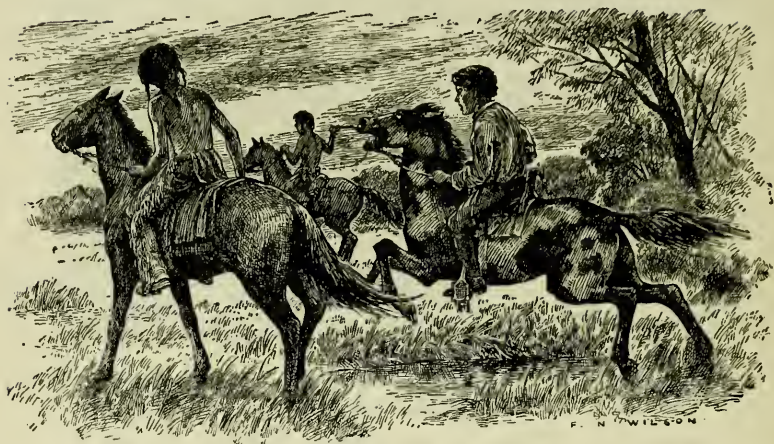
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